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THE

GENERAL CONFERENCES

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FROM

1792 TO 1896.

PREPARED BY A LITERARY STAFF UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
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PREFACE.

In preparing a history of the General Conference, the greater part of our information must be derived from the Journals of that body. These Journals are of varying fullness, the earlier ones being extremely meager, and some of them giving but little more than catch-word hints of Conference action, and containing none of the reports or addresses. They were not originally intended for publication, and the Minutes as printed seem to be only the vague notes from which the secretary might prepare—though he did not—a full report of the proceedings. The later Journals are full; and, since 1848, there has been issued a daily paper, containing a verbatim transcript of the debates, addresses, resolutions, and reports. These, and other bound volumes, have all been consulted in the preparation of this work, especially in part two.

As no copy was ever found of the Journal for 1792, the General Conference of 1892 directed the Publishing Agents to employ some one to reproduce it, as nearly as could be done, from whatever sources of information were accessible. This task was committed to Rev. T. B. Neely, D. D., than whom none is more competent to accomplish it. The result

of his labors appears in the present volume. This may be accepted as the full Journal of proceedings of that Conference, and it is an important addition to our Methodist historical literature.

The proceedings of all the other General Conferences are given only in abstract. These have been prepared by competent writers, employed by the Western Methodist Book Concern, expressly for use in this volume. Only the more important actions are referred to; but, in the two parts, the chronological and the topical, it is believed that the average student of our Church history will find all that he cares to know about the great Governing Conference. For more minute information as to what was said or suggested, he must examine the Journals themselves, and the files of the *Daily Advocate*.

LEWIS CURTS.

CINCINNATI, MARCH, 1900.

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PART I.

CHRONOLOGICAL.

The General Conferences.

1792.

(BY REV. THOS. B. NEELY, D. D., LL. D.)

THE first quadrennial General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America met in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, on Thursday, the first day of November, in the year Seventeen Hundred and Ninety-two.

This General Conference had been regularly called to meet in Baltimore at that date. Every preacher in full membership in any Annual Conference was entitled to a seat in the General Conference, and the attendance was very general.

Bishop Thomas Coke and Bishop Francis Asbury were present, and presided; Dr. Coke, as senior, doubtless presiding at the beginning of the session.

On the first day the Conference appointed a committee of the oldest preachers and a few of the younger ministers to prepare business for consideration and action by the Conference. When a majority of the committee agreed upon a proposition, and especially upon any alteration in the form of Discipline, it was to report to the Conference for its decision. Subsequently the membership of the committee was increased. The intention of the Conference in the creation of the committee was to expedite business; but as after test it was found that it did not prevent or shorten discussions in the Conference, the plan of working through a committee was abandoned, and the committee was discharged. After that, any member of the Conference was at liberty to present directly to the body any matter he might desire.

On the first day rules of order were adopted. One rule was as follows: "It shall take two-thirds of all the Conference

to make a new rule or abolish an old one; but a majority may alter or amend any rule."

One rule as to debate was, "That each person, if he choose, shall have liberty to speak three times on each motion."

SECOND DAY—FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2.

On the second day of the session, the Rev. James O'Kelly, of Virginia, offered an amendment to the law making it the duty of the Bishop "to fix the appointments of the Preachers for the several circuits," so that preachers might have the right of appeal from the appointment given by the Bishop to the Annual Conference.

The amendment was as follows: "After the Bishop appoints the Preachers at Conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the Bishop shall appoint him to another circuit."

The proposed amendment led to a long and animated discussion. As the matter related more to the administration of Bishop Asbury than to that of Bishop Coke, who was frequently absent from the country, Bishop Asbury declined to preside, and also absented himself from the session during the pendency of this question, and sent to the Conference the following letter:

My Dear Brethren,—Let my absence give you no pain—Dr. Coke presides. I am happily excused from assisting to make laws by which myself am to be governed; I have only to obey and execute. I am happy in the consideration that I never stationed a preacher through enmity or as a punishment. I have acted for the glory of God, the good of the people, and to promote the usefulness of the preachers. Are you sure, that if you please yourselves, that the people will be as fully satisfied? They often say, "Let us have such a preacher;" and sometimes, "We will not have such a preacher—we will sooner pay him to stay at home." Perhaps I must say, "His appeal forced him upon you." I am one—ye are many. I am as willing to serve you as ever. I want not to sit in any man's way. I scorn to solicit votes; I am a very trembling, poor creature to hear praise or dispraise. Speak your minds freely; but remember, you are only making laws for the present time; it may be, that as in some other things, so in this, a future day may give you further light. I am yours, etc.,

Francis Asbury.

After considerable debate upon Mr. O'Kelly's proposition, the Rev. John Dickins moved that the question be divided thus: "First—Shall the Bishop appoint the preachers to the circuits? Second—Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal?"

The first part giving the Bishop the power of appointment being put to vote, it was carried unanimously.

On the second part, as to the preacher having the right of appeal, a question was raised as to whether the proposition was a new rule or only an amendment to an old rule, and the Conference decided the law point by voting that it was only an amendment to an old rule.

THE THIRD DAY—SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3.

The debate on Mr. O'Kelly's amendment was continued on Saturday, the third day of the session, but no conclusion was reached.

THE FOURTH DAY—MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5.

On Monday, the 5th of November, the discussion was resumed, and the debate continued throughout the entire day.

Among those who took part in these discussions were James O'Kelly, Richard Ivey, Hope Hull, Freeborn Garrettson, William McKendree, and Richard Swift, in favor of the right of appeal; and Henry Willis, Jesse Lee, Thomas Morrell, Joseph Everitt, and Nelson Reed, who opposed Mr. O'Kelly's amendment.

At 5 o'clock on Monday afternoon, the Conference went to the German Reformed Church, of which the Rev. Philip Otterbein was pastor, and there remained in session until about 8 o'clock that evening. During this session in the German Reformed Church a decisive vote was taken upon Mr. O'Kelly's amendment, and the proposition granting the preacher the right of appeal from the appointment by the Bishop to the Annual Conference was decided in the negative by a large majority.

THE FIFTH DAY—TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6.

The next morning, Tuesday, November 6th, immediately after assembling, the Conference received a letter from the Rev. James O'Kelly and other preachers, who, being dissatisfied

with the adverse action of the body on the proposition to grant preachers the right of appeal from the appointment of the bishop, announced that they could no longer occupy seats in the Conference, and that, therefore, they withdrew from the General Conference, and that they would also leave the traveling connection.

Having received the communication, the Conference appointed a committee, consisting of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson and two others, to wait upon the parties who had withdrawn, and to endeavor to persuade them to reconsider their purpose and to resume their seats. The committee reported its failure to reconcile the parties to the decision of the Conference and to induce them to resume their places in the body.

REVISION OF THE DISCIPLINE.

After the withdrawal of Mr. O'Kelly and his followers, the Conference took up the general revision of the Book of Discipline and other formularies of the Church.

THE COUNCIL.

It was agreed to discard the plan for "the Council" which had been adopted by the preachers in the Conferences of 1789, upon the recommendation of the Bishops. The plan was as follows:

Q. Whereas the holding of general conferences on this extensive Continent would be attended with a variety of difficulties, and many inconveniences to the work of God; and whereas we judge it expedient that a council should be formed of chosen men out of the several districts as representatives of the whole connection, to meet at stated times; in what manner is this council to be formed, what shall be its powers, and what further regulations shall be made concerning it?

A. First—Our bishops and presiding elders shall be the members of this council; provided, that the members who form the council be never fewer than nine. And if any unavoidable circumstance prevent the attendance of a presiding elder at the council, he shall have authority to send another elder out of his own district to represent him; but the elder so sent by the absenting presiding elder, shall have no seat in the council without the approbation of the bishop or bishops, and presiding elders present. And if, after the above mentioned provisions are complied with, any unavoidable circumstance, or any contingencies reduce the number to less than nine, the bishop shall immediately summon such elders as do not preside, to complete the number.

Secondly—These shall have authority to mature everything they shall judge expedient. 1. To preserve the general union; 2. To render and preserve the external form of worship similar in all our societies through the continent; 3. To preserve the essentials of the Methodist doctrines and discipline pure and uncorrupted; 4. To correct all abuses and disorders; and, lastly, they are authorized to mature everything they may see necessary for the good of the church, and for the promoting and improving our colleges and plan of education.

Thirdly—Provided nevertheless, that nothing shall be received as the resolution of the council, unless it be assented to unanimously by the council; and nothing so assented to by the council, shall be binding in any district, till it has been agreed upon by a majority of the conference which is held for that district.

Fourthly—The bishops shall have authority to summon the council to meet at such times and places as they shall judge expedient.

Fifthly—The first council shall be held at *Cokesbury*, on the 1st day of next December.

This plan for the Council was not printed in the Book of Discipline, but was printed in the Annual Minutes of the Conferences. It was nevertheless a law of the Church. The law had been a dead letter for nearly two years. Practically dead for that time, now at the General Conference of 1792 it actually and formally ceased to be.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Provision was made for holding General Conferences in the future, the time and place of the next General Conference was agreed upon, the composition of the body was settled, and its powers were determined. The law relating to the General Conference adopted and placed in Section III of the Book of Discipline of 1792 is as follows:

Quest. 2. Who shall compose the General Conference?

Answ. All the Traveling Preachers who shall be in full connection at the time of holding the Conference.

Quest. 3. When and where shall the next General Conference be held?

Answ. On the 1st day of November, in the year 1796, in the town of Baltimore.

The use of the phrase General Conference was not new. Thus it had been used by the Rev. John Wesley in his letter requesting the holding of a General Conference in 1787, and it was used in the preamble to the plan for the Council; but

heretofore there had been no arrangement in the law for the meeting of a General Conference at a fixed time. The action of the General Conference established the General Conference as a fixed institution in the Church, and established it as a quadrennial meeting. From that time the Quadrennial General Conference became a part of the ecclesiastical economy. The powers of this General Conference were fixed definitely and the specifications as to this power were stated in different places in the new law.

According to the new arrangement the supreme executive control of the Church vested in the General Conference, and the power to make laws for the government of the Church was taken from the annual sessions of the ministers and vested in the quadrennial gathering called the General Conference, the power to elect bishops was likewise centered in the General Conference, and these officers were made amenable to that body, and in addition the General Conference was made a court of appeal.

PRESIDING ELDERS.

The General Conference fully recognized and defined the office of a Presiding Elder. Presiding Elders *de facto* had existed from the beginning of the Church, and the title appears in the plan for the Council published in 1789; but the General Conference of 1792 formally adopted the title for these supervisory officers, and distinguished between the functions of a plain elder and the Presiding Elder, who was to have the supervision of a District, and the preachers therein contained. In doing so, the Conference adopted a new section (Section V), "Of the Presiding Elders, and of their Duty," as follows:

Quest. 1. By whom are the Presiding Elders to be chosen?
Answ. By the Bishop.
Quest. 2. What are the duties of the Presiding Elder?
Answ. 1. To travel through his appointed District.

2. In the absence of a Bishop, to take charge of all the Elders, Deacons, Traveling and Local Preachers, and Exhorters in his District.

3. To change, receive, or suspend Preachers in his District during the intervals of the Conferences, and in the absence of the Bishop.

4. In the absence of a Bishop, to preside in the Conference of his District.

5. To be present, as far as practicable, at all the Quarterly Meetings; and to call together at each Quarterly Meeting all the Traveling and Local Preachers, Exhorters, Stewards and Leaders, of the Circuit, to hear complaints, and to receive Appeals.

6 To oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the Societies in his District.

7. To take care that every part of our Discipline be enforced in his District.

8. To attend the Bishop when present in his District; and to give him when absent all necessary information, by letter, of the state of his District.

Quest. 3. By whom are the Presiding Elders to be stationed and changed?

Answ. By the Bishop.

Quest. 4. How long may the Bishop allow an Elder to preside in the same District?

Answ. For any term not exceeding four years successively.

Quest. 5. How shall the Presiding Elders be supported?

Answ. If there be a surplus of public money, in one or more Circuits in his District, he shall receive such surplus, provided he do not receive more than his annual Salary. In case of a deficiency in his Salary, after such surplus is paid him, or if there be no surplus, he shall share with the Preachers of his District, in proportion with what they have respectively received, so that he receive no more than the amount of his Salary upon the whole.

DISTRICT CONFERENCES.

The General Conference decided upon the title of District Conference for the Annual Conferences of the ministers in different sections of the country. Before they were simply spoken of as the "Conference" or "Conferences," but now as the title General Conference was fixed upon for the quadrennial body, it was necessary to distinguish the annual meetings by a special name, and hence "District Conference" was selected.

The General Conference determined the boundaries, the membership, and the business of the District Conference. The Presiding Elder's District was the basis of the District Conference, but it might be composed of a number of districts. The law covering the District Conferences was placed in Section III of the Discipline of 1792, as follows:

Quest. 4. Who are the members of the District Conferences?

Answ. All the Traveling Preachers of the District or Districts respectively, who are in full connexion.

Quest. 5. How often are the District Conferences to be held?

Answ. Annually.

Quest. 6. How many Circuits shall send Preachers in order to form a District Conference?

Answ. Not fewer than three, nor more than twelve.

Quest. 7. Shall the Bishop be authorized to unite two or more Districts together, where he judges it expedient, in order to form a District Conference?

Answ. He shall, as far as is consistent with the rule immediately preceding.

Quest. 8. Who shall appoint the times of holding the District Conferences?

Answ. The Bishop.

Quest. 9. What is the method wherein we usually proceed in the District Conferences?

Answ. We inquire,

1. What Preachers are admitted on trial?
2. Who remain on trial?
3. Who are admitted into full connexion?
4. Who are the Deacons?
5. Who are the Elders?
6. Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to exercise the Episcopal Office, and superintend the Methodist Episcopal Church in America?
7. Who are under a Location, through weakness of body, or family concerns?
8. Who are the Supernumeraries?
9. Who have died this year?
10. Are all the Preachers blameless in life and conversation?
11. Who are expelled from the connexion?
12. Where are the Preachers stationed this year?
13. What numbers are in Society?
14. What has been collected for the contingent expenses?
15. How has this been expended?
16. What is contributed towards the fund for the Superannuated Preachers, and the Widows and Orphans of the Preachers?
17. What demands are there upon it?
18. Where and when shall our next Conference be held?

Quest. 10. Is there any other business to be done in the District Conferences?

Answ. The Electing and Ordaining of Elders and Deacons.

Quest. 11. How are the Districts to be formed?

Answ. According to the judgment of the Bishop.

N. B.—In case that there be no Bishop to travel through the Districts and exercise the Episcopal Office, on account of death, the Districts shall be regulated in every respect by the District Conferences and the Presiding Elders till the ensuing General Conference, (Ordinations only excepted.)

SUPERNUMERARY PREACHERS.

To this section was appended a foot-note defining a Supernumerary Preacher. It read:

A Supernumerary Preacher is one so worn out in the Itinerant service as to be rendered incapable of preaching constantly; but at the same time is willing to do any work in the ministry which the Conference may direct and his strength enable him to perform.

THE EPISCOPACY.

The General Conference of 1792 made various changes in regard to the Episcopacy, but the key to nearly all these modifications was in the creation of the Quadrennial General Conference. Before this, a Bishop could be elected by "a majority of the Conference," but under the new law a Bishop must be elected by the General Conference. Under the old law the laying on of the hands of one Bishop was sufficient, but according to the new regulation it required three Bishops, or at least one Bishop and two Elders; but it was further provided that when there was no Bishop the new Bishop should be set apart by Elders selected for that purpose by the General Conference. The duties and limitations of the Bishopric were more carefully stated. Now the Bishop was "to travel through the connexion at large," instead of traveling "through as many circuits as he can." A Bishop was to be amenable to the General Conference, and provision was made for the trial of a Bishop during the interval between two General Conferences, and this court was to have power to suspend a Bishop until the next session of the General Conference.

The law as amended by the General Conference was as follows:

THE MAKING OF BISHOPS AND THEIR DUTY.

SECTION IV.—*Of the Election and Consecration of Bishops, and of their Duty.*

Quest. 1. How is a Bishop to be constituted in future?

Answ. By the election of the General Conference, and the laying on of the hands of three Bishops, or at least of one Bishop and two Elders.

Quest. 2. If by death, expulsion, or otherwise, there be no Bishop remaining in our Church, what shall we do?

Answ. The General Conference shall elect a Bishop; and the Elders, or any three of them, that shall be appointed by the General

Conference for that purpose, shall ordain him according to our Office of Ordination.

Quest. 3. What is the Bishop's duty?

Answ. 1. To preside in our Conferences.

2. To fix the appointments of the Preachers for the several Circuits.

3. In the intervals of the Conferences, to change, receive, or suspend Preachers, as necessity may require.

4. To travel through the connexion at large.

5. To oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the Societies.

6. To ordain Bishops, Elders, and Deacons.

Quest. 4. To whom is a Bishop amenable for his conduct?

Answ. To the General Conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary.

Quest. 5. What provision shall be made for the trial of an immoral Bishop, in the interval of the General Conference?

Answ. If a Bishop be guilty of immorality, three Traveling Elders shall call upon him, and examine him on the subject; and if the three Elders verily believe that the Bishop is guilty of the crime, they shall call to their aid two Presiding Elders from two Districts in the neighborhood of that where the crime was committed, each of which Presiding Elders shall bring with him two Elders, or an Elder and a Deacon. The above mentioned nine persons shall form a Conference, to examine into the charge brought against the Bishop; and if two-thirds of them verily believe him to be guilty of the crime laid to his charge, they shall have authority to suspend the Bishop till the ensuing General Conference, and the Districts shall be regulated in the meantime as is provided in the case of the death of a Bishop.

Quest. 6. If the Bishop cease from traveling at large among the people, shall he still exercise his Office among us in any degree?

Answ. If he cease from traveling without the consent of the General Conference, he shall not thereafter exercise any ministerial function whatsoever in our Church.

N. B.—The Bishop has obtained liberty, by the suffrages of the Conference, to ordain Local Preachers to the Office of Deacons, provided they obtain a testimonial from the Society to which they belong, and from the Stewards of the Circuit, signed also by three Elders, three Deacons, and three Traveling Preachers.

TRAVELING ELDERS.

With the full recognition of two classes of Elders—namely, those who possessed the orders of an Elder and those Elders who held the office of Presiding Elder—the General Conference found it necessary carefully to define the duties of each class, and therefore made two sections, one defining the official duties of a Presiding Elder, and another defining the duties of the ordinary Elders.

It was now provided that Elders were to be elected by the District Conference instead of "the Conference." In contradistinction to the Presiding Elders these are called "Traveling Elders," and the specifications which related to the official work of a Presiding Elder were taken out and placed in the section upon the Presiding Eldership, and the modified law appeared in the following form:

ELECTION, ORDINATION, AND DUTY OF TRAVELING ELDERS.

SECTION VI.—*Of the Election and Ordination of Traveling Elders, and of their Duty.*

Quest. 1. How is an *Elder* constituted?

Answ. By the election of a majority of the District Conference, and by the laying on of the hands of a Bishop, and of the Elders that are present.

Quest. 2. What is the duty of a Traveling Elder?

Answ. 1. To administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to perform the office of matrimony, and all parts of divine worship.

2. To do all the duties of a Traveling Preacher.

N. B.—No Elder that ceases to travel without the consent of the District Conference, certified under the hand of the President of the Conference, shall on any account exercise the peculiar functions of his office amongst us.

TRAVELING DEACONS.

The title of the Deacons who were members of the District Conferences was changed to Traveling Deacons, in order to distinguish them from the Local Preachers, who had Deacons' orders. Instead of being elected by "the Conference," they were now to be elected by the "District Conference." The old duty of a Deacon, "To see that the other Preachers in his circuit behave well, and want nothing," was taken out of the special duties of a Deacon and is made the duty of any Preacher who has charge of a circuit, but the Traveling Deacon is to perform "all the duties of a Traveling Preacher." With these changes the new law read:

ELECTION, ORDINATION, AND DUTY OF TRAVELING DEACONS.

SECTION VII.—*Of the Election and Ordination of Traveling Deacons, and of their Duty.*

Quest. 1. How is a *Traveling* Deacon constituted?

Answ. By the election of the majority of the District Conference, and the laying on of the hands of a Bishop.

Quest. 2. What is the duty of a *Traveling* Deacon?

Answ. 1. To baptize, and perform the office of matrimony, in the absence of the Elder.

2. To assist the Elder in administering the Lord's Supper.

3. To do all the duties of a Traveling Preacher.

N. B.—No Deacon that ceases to travel without the consent of the District Conference, certified under the hand of the President of the Conference, shall on any account exercise the peculiar functions of his office.

ADMISSION OF PREACHERS INTO THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

The law relating to the admission of Preachers into the regular ministry in the Conference was revised in several particulars. Before the Preacher was to be received by "the Conference," now he is to be received "by the District Conference." Under the old form he could be received temporarily by "the Bishop, or an Elder, until the sitting of the Conference," but now it was to be "by the Bishop, or Presiding Elder of the District, until the sitting of the Conference," and according to the former law the "written license" was to be "from his Elder or Bishop," now it was to be "from the Bishop or Presiding Elder."

THE METHOD OF RECEIVING PREACHERS, AND THEIR DUTY.

The revised law appears as

SECTION VIII.—*Of the Method of receiving Preachers, and of their Duty.*

Quest. 1. How is a Preacher to be received?

Answ. 1. By the District Conference.

2. In the interval of the Conference, by the Bishop, or Presiding Elder of the District, until the sitting of the Conference.

3. When his name is not printed in the Minutes, he must receive a written license from the Bishop or Presiding Elder.

As to the succeeding portion of the section on the duties of a Preacher various modifications were made.

The old duty "To meet the Leaders" is taken out and elsewhere made the duty of those in charge of Circuits, for all Preachers were not in charge, and therefore would not have this responsibility. The former question and answer: "Are

the Preachers to read our Liturgy?" *Answ.* "All that have received a written direction for that purpose, under the hand of a Bishop or Elder, may read the Liturgy as often as they think it expedient," were stricken out. The Sunday service, which had been prepared by the Rev. John Wesley, and had been adopted, and for years used by the Church, had fallen into disuse. To meet this fact, another provision was inserted in a later section.

An entirely new regulation in regard to receiving Preachers as probationers in the Conference was inserted as follows:

"But no one shall be received, unless he first procure a recommendation from the Quarterly Meeting of his Circuit."

RECEPTION INTO CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP.

The old law: "After two years' probation, being recommended by the Elders and Deacons present, and examined by the Bishop, he may be received into full connection, by giving him the form of discipline, inscribed thus: "*As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavor to walk by these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-laborer,*" was changed to read: "After two years' probation, being approved by the District Conference, and examined by the President of the Conference, he may be received into full connexion, by giving him the form of discipline," etc.

The "N. B." which had appeared at the close of the old section was modified, and in its new form was carried to the end of the new "Section X." In the Discipline of 1791 it read: "N. B.—Let none, who are *local*, preach or exhort in any of our Societies without a note of permission from the Deacon: Let every local Preacher or Exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly: and let every Elder insist upon it." The General Conference of 1792 substituted for this at the end of Section VIII: "N. B.—If any Preacher absent himself from his Circuit without the leave of the Presiding Elder, the Presiding Elder shall, as far as possible, fill his place with another Preacher, who shall be paid for his labors out of the salary of the absent Preacher in proportion to the usual allowance."

COLLECTIONS.

The law of 1791, in regard to collections, had the following:

Quest. 1. How many collections are to be made in a year?

Answ. 1. A quarterly collection from the members of the society, to supply the Preachers; and when that is deficient, a public quarterly collection: If there be any overplus, let one third of it be reserved for future deficiencies; one third be given to the poor in general; and one third applied to the building or improving of our churches. If there is money left in the hands of the stewards at the close of the year, let it be sent to the Conference.

2. A yearly collection from all our members that are of ability, for the building of convenient churches.

3. A collection, at love-feasts and on sacramental occasions, for the poor of our own society.

4. An annual collection or subscription for the college.

5. An annual public collection for the contingencies of the Conference; which shall be applied,

1. To discharge the deficiencies of those Preachers who shall not have received their full salary in their circuits; and,

2. To defray the expenses of our missions to distant parts of the continent.

This disappears as a formulation here, or in any one place, but some of its points in other forms were placed in other parts of the Discipline for 1792.

SALARIES OF PREACHERS.

The substance of the remaining part of the old Section VII appears in "Section IX: *Of the Salaries of the Ministers and Preachers.*"

In the place of the old Section VII, the Discipline of 1792 has "Section IX. Of the Salaries of the Ministers and Preachers." This marks a distinction between ministers and preachers! The distinction between the classes thus indicated is not difficult to ascertain. The minister was a member of the District Conference and was in orders. The preacher had authority to preach, but he was not a member of the District Conference. He might be a probationer in connection with the Conference, or merely a local preacher with a license, or he might even be a local preacher with orders.

Under this heading the second question of Section VII of

1791 becomes the first question of Section IX in 1792. In 1791 the question read: "Quest. 2. What is the regular annual salary of the Bishops, Elders, Deacons, and Preachers?" The question as it appears in the Discipline of 1792, under the new section, is: "Quest. 1. What is the annual salary of the Bishops, Elders, Deacons, and Preachers?" It will be observed that the word "regular" was dropped. This suggests the probable fact that they did not regularly receive even the small amount specified.

The answer in 1791 was: "Twenty-four pounds Pennsylvania currency, and their traveling expenses." In 1792 it was changed to read: "Answ. Sixty-four dollars, and their traveling expenses."

The former "Quest. 3. What shall be annually allowed the wives of the married Preachers?" becomes the second question in the new section; but the former answer: "Twenty-four pounds Pennsylvania currency, if they are in want of it," was made to read: "Answ. Sixty-four dollars, if they want it." This took into consideration the financial condition of the wife.

In 1792 a new question and a new answer were introduced, namely:

Quest. 3. What plan shall we pursue in appropriating the money received by our Traveling Ministers for Marriage fees?

Answ. In all the Circuits where the Preachers do not receive their full Quarterage, let all such money be given into the hands of the Stewards, and be equally divided between the Traveling Preachers of the Circuit. In all other cases the money shall be disposed of at the discretion of the District Conference.

Prior to this the preachers were not permitted to receive any money for performing the marriage ceremony.

The closing paragraph of the old section was eliminated. It read: "N. B.—That no Ministers or Preachers, traveling or local, shall receive any support, either in money or other provision, for their services, without the knowledge of the Stewards of the Circuits, and its being properly entered quarterly on the books." The following was substituted at the end of the new section of 1792: "N. B.—No Minister or Preacher whatsoever shall receive any money for deficiencies, or on any other account, out of any of our funds or collections, without first

giving an exact account of all the money, clothes, and other presents of every kind, which he has received the preceding year." The purpose of this was evidently to secure equality of support.

PREACHERS IN CHARGE.

"Section X" of the Discipline of 1792 has a new heading, namely, "Of the Duties of those who have the Charge of Circuits;" but it contains much of "Section VI" of the Discipline of 1791, the title of which was: "Of the Method of receiving Preachers, and their Duty," though there are variations. It also contains matter from "Section V" of 1791, the title of which was: "Of the constituting of Deacons, and their Duty."

Under the act of the General Conference of 1792 the person in charge of a Circuit might be a preacher without as well as with orders, and not simply a Deacon. Consequently, in this section of 1792 there appears: "Quest. 1. What are the duties of the Elder, Deacon, or Preacher who has the special charge of a Circuit?"

The first answer is the same as Answer 3 of Question 2, in Section V of 1791. The second answer is the same as Answer 4 under the same question of 1791. Answer 3, "To meet the Stewards and Leaders as often as possible," is partly new and partly an expansion of Answer 4 of Question 2, Section VI of 1791, "To meet the Leaders." Answer 4, "To appoint all the Stewards and Leaders, and change them when he sees it necessary," is the same as Answer 5 of Question 2, Section V of 1791. Answer 5, "To receive, try, and expel members according to the form of discipline," is new as a formal answer, though in 1791 there was a section on "Bringing to Trial, finding guilty, reproving, suspending, and excluding disorderly persons from Society and Church Privileges."

Answer 6 is the same as Answer 6 of Section V of 1791. Answer 7, "To hold Quarterly Meetings in the absence of the Presiding Elder," takes the place of Answer 7, Question 2, Section V of 1791, which read: "To hold Quarterly Meetings and therein diligently to enquire both into the temporal and spiritual state of each Society." Now the Presiding Elder is

to hold the Quarterly Meeting, if he is present, and so the old duty of inquiring as to the state of the Society passes to that officer.

Answer 8 is the same as Answer 8 of Question 2 of Section V of 1791, with the exception that certain specifications are eliminated. In 1791 the answer read: "To take care that every Society be duly supplied with books; particularly with the Saints' Rest, Instructions for Children, and the Primitive Physic; which ought to be in every house." The revised answer ended with the word "books."

Answer 9 is the same as the corresponding 9 in the old Section V of 1791. Answer 10 is the same as Answer 10 under Question 2 in Section V of 1791, only that "Presiding Elder" is substituted for "Elder." Answer 11 is the same as 11 of Section V of 1791, "To meet the men and women apart in the large Societies once a quarter," but with the addition of the words "wherever practicable."

Answer 12 is the same as the corresponding answer 12 in Section V of 1791. Answer 13 is the same as the 13 of Section V of 1791, namely, "To appoint a person to receive the quarterly collection in the *classes*, and to be present at the time of receiving it," only that the closing part, "and to be present at the time of receiving it," was omitted. Answer 14 is the same as the corresponding 14 of the same Section of 1791.

Answer 15 is the former 15 expanded. In 1791 it read: "To move a yearly subscription through these Circuits that can bear it, for building Churches." In 1792 it read: "To raise a yearly subscription in those Circuits, that can bear it, for building Churches, and paying the debts of those which have been already erected."

Answer 16 is the same as the former 16, except that the old-fashioned spelling "chuse" gives way to the better form "choose."

Question 3 of 1792 is the same as the former Quest. 3 of Section V of 1791, "What other directions shall we give the Deacons?" excepting that "the Deacons" is taken out and the word "him," that is to say, the Preacher in charge, is inserted.

The general "Answ. Several" is the same in 1792 as in

1791, and the specifications under the "several" are mainly the same. The first, second, and third, and some others are exactly the same, excepting that "To" is prefixed. Thus the old form had: "1. Take a regular catalogue of the Societies in towns and cities, as they live in streets," is made to read: "To take a regular catalogue," etc.

Answer 4, which read, "Vigorously, but calmly, enforce the rules concerning needless ornaments and drams," is changed to read: "To enforce vigorously, but calmly, all the rules of the Society."

Answers 5 and 6 are exactly the same as the old form, with the exception that to each the word "To" is prefixed. Answer 7 is essentially the same as the former 7 in regard to the issuing of certificates of membership, but "warn" is made to read "To warn," and instead of "a note of recommendation from the Elder or Deacon," it is changed to read "from a Preacher of the Circuit." Answer 8 is the same as the 8 of the former Discipline, with a very slight change in the phrasing. In 1791 it was: "Everywhere recommend decency and cleanliness." In 1792 it became: "To recommend everywhere decency and cleanliness."

Answer 9 is the former 9 slightly modified. In 1791 it was: "Read the rules of the Society, with the aid of the Preachers, once a year, in every congregation, and once a quarter in every Society." The General Conference of 1792 made it read: "To read the rules of the Society, with the aid of the other Preachers, once a year in every congregation, and once a quarter in every Society."

Answer 10, concerning arbitration, was made more specific than the old answer 10. The form in 1791 was: "On any dispute between two or more members of our Society, which can not be settled by the parties concerned," etc. In 1792 it was changed, so as to read: "On any dispute between two or more members of our Society, concerning the payment of debts or otherwise," etc.

Following the tenth answer in 1791 was a "N. B." which read: "If any member of our Society enter into a lawsuit with another member before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled." The General Conference of 1792 took out

the "N. B." and added to answer 10 the following: "And if any member of our Society shall refuse, in cases of debt or other disputes, to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended by him who has the charge of the Circuit, with the approbation of the Stewards and Leaders; or shall enter into a lawsuit with another member before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled."

The eleventh answer is a slight modification of the fifth answer of Section XVII of 1791. There it was: "Wherever you can in large Societies appoint prayer-meetings." In 1792 the substance of this was inserted as answer 11 in this Section, but slightly modified in phraseology, as follows: "The Preacher, who has the charge of a Circuit, shall appoint prayer-meetings wherever he can in his Circuit." So answer 12 of 1792 is a modified transposition of the closing paragraph of Section XVII of 1791. Then it was: "Lastly, let a fast be published at every Quarterly Meeting for the Friday following; and a memorandum of it be written on all the Class Papers." The General Conference of 1792 inserted it as answer 12, in this form: "He shall take care that a Fast be held in every Society in his Circuit, on the Friday preceding every Quarterly Meeting; and that a memorandum of it be written on all the Class Papers."

The "N. B." at the end of Section VI of 1791 was enlarged and otherwise modified, and in the new form inserted as answer 13 of this Section of 1792. Before it read: "N. B.—Let none, who are *local*, preach or exhort in any of our Societies without a note of permission from the Deacon; let every Local Preacher or Exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly; and let every Elder insist upon it." As answer 13 of the present Section of 1792 it read: "He shall take care that no unordained Local Preacher or Exhorter in his Circuit shall officiate in public, without first obtaining a License from the Presiding Elder or himself. Let every unordained Local Preacher and Exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly; and let him who has the charge of the Circuit insist upon it."

THE CALL TO PREACH.

Section XI, "Of the Trial of those, who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach," is the same as Section XII of the Discipline of 1791.

PREACHING.

In making up the new Section XII, the General Conference of 1792 used the matter of Section XV of 1791: "Of the Matter and Manner of Preaching, and of other public Exercises." There are, however, a few variations.

The old "Quest. 3. Have not some of us been led off from practical preaching by (what is called) preaching Christ?" was stricken out, and for it was substituted: "Quest. 2. What is the most effectual way of preaching Christ?" The answer to the second question is the same as the former answer to the old Question 3. Question 2 of 1791 became in 1792: "Quest. 3. Are there any smaller advices which might be of use to us?" In the main the answer is the same, but there are some modifications. The second item of the old answer had: "Begin precisely at the time appointed." In 1792 the word "precisely" was omitted. In the fifth, "chuse" is changed to "choose." In the eighth the old form was: "Print nothing without the approbation of the Conference, and one of the Bishops;" but the General Conference of 1792 made it read: "Print nothing without the approbation of the Conference, or of one of the Bishops." All the other specifications in this section remained as before.

THE DUTY OF PREACHERS TO GOD, THEMSELVES, AND ONE ANOTHER.

Section XIII is essentially the same as Section X of the Discipline of 1791, with the title: "Of the Duty of Preachers to God, themselves, and one another."

There are, however, some changes. In 1791 one of the sub-questions in the answer to "Quest. 2" was: "Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement—viz., 5 o'clock?" In 1792 the question was made to end with the word "retirement"—"Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement?"

The Discipline of 1791 had as a division of "means of grace," after giving "I. The instituted;" "II. Prudential means we may use, either as Christians, as Methodists, as Preachers, or as Ministers." The action of 1792 struck out the words "as Ministers," and inserted the word "or" before the words "as Preachers," so that it closed with "or as Preachers." This consolidation of the idea of ministers and preachers under one word carried with it the consolidation of the old items "3. As Ministers," and "4. As Preachers," in one item: "3. As Preachers." In the second division under this head there had been the question: "Do you eat no flesh suppers?" but this does not appear in the Discipline for 1792. In the fourth item (4) under the question as to self-denial the word "choose" of 1791 becomes "chuse" in 1792—"(4.) Do you chuse and use water for your common drink? And only take wine medicinally or sacramentally?"

The former paragraph, "3. Wherein do you take up your cross daily? Do you cheerfully bear your cross (whatever is grievous to nature) as a gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?" is changed in 1792 so as to read: "Wherein do you take up your cross daily? Do you cheerfully bear your cross, however grievous to nature, as a gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?"

RULES FOR CONTINUING OR DESISTING FROM PREACHING AT ANY PLACE.

Section XIV of 1792, entitled: "Rules by which we should continue, or desist from, Preaching at any Place," is precisely the same as Section XIV of the Discipline of 1791.

VISITING FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.

Section XV of 1792, "Of visiting from House to House, guarding against those Sins that are so common to Professors, and enforcing Practical Religion," is mainly the same as Section XXV of the Discipline of 1791. There are, however, changes of more or less moment. Thus, "Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" is changed to "Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Answer 5 to the third question had closed with the following injunction: "Extirpate bribery, receiving any thing

directly or indirectly, for voting at any election. Shew no respect to persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing." In 1792 to this exhortation was added the direction: "And strongly advise our people to discontinue all treats given by candidates before or at elections, and not be partakers in any respect of such iniquitous practices."

"Quest. 4. What shall we do to prevent scandal, when any of our members fail in business or contract debts which they are not able to pay?" of 1791 is the same in 1792, but there are some changes in the answer. In 1791 it read: "Let the Elder or Deacon desire two or three judicious members of the society to inspect the accounts of the supposed delinquents; and if they have behaved dishonestly, or borrowed money without a probability of paying, let them be suspended until their credit is restored." In 1792, "Let the Elder or Deacon" was changed to "Let him who has charge of the Circuit." The plural "delinquents" is changed to the singular "delinquent," and this is followed by the necessary grammatical changes of "they" into "he" and "have" into "has." "Let them be suspended until their credit is restored" was stricken out, and "Let him be expelled" was inserted. The amended part of the conclusion then read: "To inspect the account of the supposed delinquent, and if he has behaved dishonestly, or borrowed money without a probability of paying, let him be expelled."

INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

Section XVI, with the title, "Of the Instruction of Children," is almost exactly the same as Section XXVI of the Discipline of 1791. In the Discipline for 1792 there are, however, eight numbered answers instead of seven as in 1791; but the first answer in the new Discipline of 1792 was in the older Discipline, only it was not numbered. In 1792 it was made "Answ. 1." and the numbering of the other answers was changed to harmonize with that. The only other change was the insertion of the word "and" before the word "diligently" in answer 6, so that it read: "And diligently instruct and exhort all parents at their own houses."

THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME PROFITABLY.

Section XVII of the Discipline of 1792, entitled, "Of employing our Time profitably, when we are not traveling, or engaged in public Exercises," is the Section XVIII of the Discipline with some modifications. Thus answer 3 to question 1 in 1791 read: "From six in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast), read in order, with much prayer, the Christian Library, and other pious books." In 1792 the reading "in order" Wesley's "Christian Library" was taken out and the closing part became: "read, with much prayer, some of our best religious tracts."

In the answer to the third question, "But why are we not more knowing?" the portion of the former answer which read, "I fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear," was changed to the plural, "We fear," etc., and "Which of you spends as many hours a day in God's work, as you did formerly in man's work," was changed to read: "Which of us spends as many hours in God's work, as he did formerly in man's work?" These were the only changes.

THE NECESSITY OF UNION.

Section XVIII in the Discipline of 1792—"Of the Necessity of Union among ourselves," is almost exactly the same as Section XI of the Discipline of 1791. In the latter, however, the question was numbered 1, but in the new Discipline the 1 does not appear, as there is no other question. The only other difference is a note which was appended in 1792, which was as follows: "N. B.—We recommend a serious perusal of *The Causes, Evils, and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions.*"

THE TRIAL OF MINISTERS OR PREACHERS.

Section XIX of 1792 corresponds to Section XXXIII of the Discipline of 1791. The heading in 1791 was: "Of the Manner by which immoral Ministers and Preachers shall be brought to Trial, found guilty, reproved, and suspended in the intervals of Conference." In 1792 the heading became: "Of the Method by which immoral Ministers or Preachers shall be

brought to trial, found guilty, and reproved or suspended in the Intervals of the Conferences."

The first question in 1791 was: "Quest. 1. What shall be done when an Elder, Deacon, or Preacher is under the report of being guilty of some capital crime, expressly forbidden in the word of God as an unchristian practice, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, and to make him a subject of wrath and hell?" This was changed in a single particular—namely, by striking out the word "capital," so that instead of reading "guilty of some capital crime," it read "guilty of *some crime*, expressly forbidden," etc.

The former answer read: "Let the Presiding Elder call as many Ministers to the trial as he shall think fit, at least three, and if possible bring the accused and accuser face to face; if the person is clearly convicted, he shall be suspended from official services in the Church, and not be allowed the privileges of a member. But if the accused be a *Presiding* Elder, the Preachers must call in the *Presiding* Elder of the neighboring district, who is required to attend and act as judge." The General Conference of 1792 amended this so as to make it read: "Let the Presiding Elder, in the absence of a Bishop, call as many Ministers as he shall think fit, at least three, and if possible bring the accused and accuser face to face. If the person be clearly convicted, he shall be suspended from all official services in the Church till the ensuing District Conference, at which his case shall be fully considered and determined. But if the accused be a *Presiding* Elder, the Preachers must call in the Presiding Elder of the neighboring District, who is required to attend, and preside at the trial."

In 1791 the second paragraph of the answer read: "If the persons can not be brought face to face, but the supposed delinquent flees from trial, it shall be received as presumptive proof of guilt, and out of the mouth of two or three witnesses he shall be condemned. Nevertheless, he may demand a trial face to face, or he may appeal to the next Conference in that District." This was changed to read as follows: "If the accused and accuser can not be brought face to face, but the supposed delinquent flees from trial, it shall be received as

a presumptive proof of guilt, and out of the mouth of two or three witnesses he shall be condemned. Nevertheless, even in that case, the District Conference shall reconsider the whole matter, and determine."

The second question of 1791: "*Quest.* 2. What shall be done in cases of improper tempers, words, or actions, or a breach of the articles and Discipline of the Church?" was, in 1792, divided into two questions.

The first part became: "*Quest.* 2. What shall be done in cases of improper tempers, words, or actions?" and the second part became: "*Quest.* 3. What shall be done with those Ministers or Preachers who hold and preach doctrines which are contrary to our Articles of Religion?" That eliminated from the old form, "a breach of the articles and Discipline of the Church," all reference to the "Discipline of the Church," and limited it to holding and preaching "doctrines which are contrary to our Articles of Religion."

The answer to the double question in 1791 was as follows: "The person so offending shall be reprehended by his Bishop, Elder, Deacon, or Preacher that has charge of the Circuit; or if he be a Bishop, he shall be reprehended by the Conference. Should a second transgression take place, one, two or three Preachers may be called in; if not cured then, he shall be tried at the Quarterly Meeting by the Elder and Preachers present; if still incurable, he shall be brought before the Conference, and if found guilty and impenitent, he shall be expelled from the connection, and his name so returned in the Minutes."

The answer to the first part of the old question, which became the second question of 1792, was changed so that it read: "The person so offending shall be reprehended by his senior in office. Should a second transgression take place, one, two or three Ministers or Preachers are to be taken as witnesses. If he be not then cured, he shall be tried at the Conference of his District, and, if found guilty and impenitent, shall be expelled from the connexion, and his name so returned in the Minutes of the Conference."

The new "*Quest.* 3. What shall be done with those Ministers or Preachers who hold and preach doctrines which are

contrary to our Articles of Religion?" was answered as follows: "*Answ.* Let the same process be observed as in cases of gross immorality; but if the Minister or Preacher so offending do solemnly engage neither to preach nor defend such erroneous doctrines in public or in private, he shall be borne with till his case be laid before the next District Conference, which shall determine the matter." At the end of the whole section was placed a paragraph intended to cover all the proceedings specified in the section. It was in these words: "Provided, nevertheless, that in all the above mentioned cases of trial and conviction, an appeal to the ensuing General Conference shall be allowed." This was the first time it was made possible to appeal to the Quadrennial General Conference.

The section, in 1791, had the following closing note: "N. B.—Any Preacher suspended at a Quarterly Meeting from preaching, shall not resume that employment again but by the order of the Conference. But it is to be observed, that a Preacher shall be tried by a Deacon, a Deacon by an Elder, an Elder by a Presiding Elder, and a Presiding Elder by the Presiding Elder of a neighboring District." This was taken out in 1792, and the above mentioned provision for appeal to the General Conference occupied its place.

PROVISION FOR SERVICES ON THE CIRCUITS WHEN THE MINISTERS ARE IN ATTENDANCE UPON THE SESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.

Section XX of 1792—"How to provide for the Circuits in the Time of Conference, and to preserve and increase the Work of God," takes the place of Section XVII of 1791. The old section had:

Quest. What can be done to supply the Circuits during the sitting of the Conference?

Answ. Let all the appointments stand according to the plan of the circuit.

2. Engage as many local Preachers and Exhorters as will supply them, and let them be paid for their time in proportion to the salary of the Traveling Preachers.

3. If Preachers and Exhorters can not attend, let some person of ability be appointed in every Society to sing, pray, and read one of Mr. Wesley's sermons.

4. And if that can not be done, let there be prayer-meetings.

5. Wherever you can, in large Societies, appoint prayer-meetings.

Lastly, let a fast be published at every quarterly meeting for the Friday following, and a memorandum of it be written on all the class-papers. Also be active in dispersing the books among the people.

This section was modified in various particulars by the General Conference of 1792. In Answer 4 the words, "And if that can not be done," were changed to "But if that can not be done." Answer 5 of 1791 was taken out of the section, and in substance was inserted in the new Answer 11 under the second question of Section X of 1792, and the closing paragraph of 1791, in regard to the fast, was taken out and placed in Answer 12 of the new Section X, with the modification that the fasting was to precede the Quarterly Meeting, while the part in reference to "dispersing the books" entirely disappears, doubtless because essentially the same duty was mentioned elsewhere both in the Discipline of 1791 and 1792.

BAPTISM.

Section XXI—"Of Baptism," in 1792, corresponds to Section XIX of the Discipline of 1791.

The old form was, "Let every adult person, and the parents of every child to be baptized, have the choice either of immersion, sprinkling, or pouring."

"N. B.—We will on no account whatever receive a present for administering baptism, or the burial of the dead."

A few changes were made in the new Discipline. Thus the old form, "or the burial of the dead," was changed to "or for burying of the dead."

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Section XXII of 1792, entitled, "Of the Lord's Supper," is very much the same as Section XX of 1791, and takes its place. There were two modifications. In the old law the first answer to the question, "Are there any directions to be given concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper?" was: "Answ. 1. Let those who choose receive it kneeling, or those who do not, either standing or sitting," was changed in 1792 to read, "Let those who have scruples concerning the receiving of it kneeling, be permitted to receive it either standing or sitting."

The second answer remained the same as before—namely, "2. Let no person that is not a member of our Society be admitted to the communion, without examination and some token given by an Elder or Deacon."

In 1792 the following note was appended: "No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our society."

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Section XXIII, in the Discipline of 1792, "Of Public Worship," is new throughout. It is as follows:

Quest. What directions shall be given for the establishment of uniformity in public worship amongst us on the Lord's Day?

Answ. 1. Let the morning service consist of singing, prayer, the reading of a chapter out of the Old Testament, and another out of the New, and preaching.

2. Let the afternoon service consist of singing, prayer, the reading of one chapter out of the Bible, and preaching.

3. Let the evening service consist of singing, prayer, and preaching.

4. But on the days of administering the Lord's Supper, the two chapters in the morning service may be omitted.

5. Let the Society be met, wherever it is practicable, on the Sabbath day.

THE SPIRIT AND TRUTH OF SINGING.

Section XXIV, "Of the Spirit and Truth of Singing," in the Discipline of 1792, is the same as Section XIII of the Discipline of 1791, with the exception of two answers and a note which were added.

The new answers were: "14. The Preachers are desired not to encourage the singing of fugue-tunes in our congregations," and, "15. Let it be recommended to our people not to attend the singing-schools which are not under our direction."

These were additional answers to the question, "How shall we guard against formality in singing?"

The new foot-note was: "N. B.—We do not think that fugue-tunes are sinful, or improper to be used in private companies; but we do not approve of their being used in our public congregations, because public singing is a part of Divine Worship in which all the congregation ought to join."

RAISING FUNDS FOR SUPERANNUATED PREACHERS AND WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF PREACHERS.

Section XXV, "Of the Method of raising a Fund for the Superannuated Preachers and the Widows and Orphans of Preachers," in the Discipline of 1792, is the Section XXIX of 1791 considerably amended.

The second answer of the old section, "Let every one when first admitted as a Traveling Preacher pay twenty shillings Pennsylvania currency," was changed to read as follows: "Let every Preacher, when first admitted into full connexion, pay two dollars and two-thirds, at the Conference of his District," and became Answer 1 in the Discipline of 1792.

The first answer of 1791, "Let every Preacher contribute two dollars yearly at the Conference," was made Answer 2 in 1792, and made to read as follows: "Let every other Preacher in full connexion contribute two dollars every year, except the Conference dispense with the payment in cases of distress; in which instances the Preacher so indulged shall be entitled to all the privileges of the fund, in the same manner as if they had paid their subscription."

The third answer in the old form, "Let the money be lodged in the hands of the Presiding Elder, or lent to the college, and an account thereof be kept by the Deacon," was greatly changed, and appeared in 1792 in the following form: "Let the money be lodged in the book fund, and for this purpose be sent as soon as may be, from time to time, to the General Book Steward: and the book fund shall pay interest for the same."

After the third answer, in 1791, there appeared the following note: "N. B.—The application of the money shall rest with the Conference." This disappeared from this place in 1792, but its essential idea may be found in Answer 11 of 1792.

The former Answer 5, "Every worn-out Preacher shall receive, if he wants it, not usually more than twenty-four pounds annually, Pennsylvania currency," was changed to read, "Every worn-out Preacher shall receive, if he need it, not usually more than sixty-four dollars annually."

Answer 6 of 1791, "Every widow of a Preacher shall re-

ceive yearly, if she wants it, during her widowhood twenty pounds," was amended so as to read, "Every widow of a Preacher shall receive annually, if she need it, during her widowhood fifty-three dollars and one-third."

The seventh answer of 1791, "Every child of a Preacher shall receive once for all, if he wants it, twenty pounds," became in 1792, "Every orphan of a Preacher shall receive once for all, if needed, fifty-three dollars and one-third."

The former Answer 8, "But none shall be entitled to anything from this fund till he has paid fifty shillings," was changed to read, "But no one shall be entitled to anything from this fund till he has paid six dollars and two-thirds."

The former Answer 9, "Nor any one who neglects paying his subscription for three years together, unless he be sent by the Conference out of these United States," became, "Nor any one who neglects to pay his subscription and arrears for three years together, unless he be employed on foreign missions, or has received a dispensation as above mentioned."

Answer 10 of 1791, "Let every assistant, as far as possible, bring to the Conference the contribution of every Preacher left behind in his Circuit," was altered so as to read: "Let every Preacher who has the care of a Circuit, bring to the Conference, as far as possible, the contribution of every Preacher left behind in his Circuit."

The section, in 1791, ended with the tenth answer, but in 1792 six other answers were added, as follows:

11. Every person who desires support from this fund, shall first make his case known to the District Conference, which shall determine how far he is a proper subject of relief.

12. The President of the District Conference shall give an order on the General Steward of the book fund, or any of his agents, for any sum of money allowed by the Conference, agreeably to these rules.

13. The receipts and disbursements of the fund shall be printed annually in the Minutes of the Conference.

14. The Presiding Elder of each District shall keep a regular account of all the concerns of the fund, as far as they relate to his District, in a proper book, which he shall hand down to his successor.

15. The next District Conferences shall give certificates to all their members respectively, for all the money which each Preacher has already advanced to the fund, as far as it can be ascertained, and

in future, each member of the fund shall receive a certificate from his District Conference for the payment of his subscription.

16. The fund shall never be reduced to less than six hundred dollars.

A GENERAL FUND FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

Section XXVI of 1792 has the title, "Of raising a general Fund for the Propagation of the Gospel," is essentially the same as Section XXVIII of 1791, which opened with the question, "How may we raise a general fund for carrying on the whole work of God?" This question was continued in 1792. The answer in 1791 began, "By a yearly collection, and, if need be, a quarterly one, to be raised by every assistant in every principal congregation in his Circuit. To this end, he may then read and enlarge upon the following hints in every such congregation."

The changes made in this part in 1792 were merely verbal. "Every assistant" was changed to "every one who has charge of a Circuit," and the words "in every such congregation," at the end, were omitted.

In the hints which followed the general answer no material modifications were made, the only changes being the substitution of "whether there be societies or not" for "whether there are societies or not;" and "Beside this" for "Besides this." So that these particular parts read: "By this means those who willingly offer themselves, may travel through every part, whether there be societies or not, and stay wherever there is a call, without being burdensome to any," and "Beside this, in carrying on so large a work through the continent, there are calls for money in various ways, and we must frequently be at considerable expense, or the work must be at a full stop."

This section ended Chapter 1 of the New Discipline of 1792.

CHAPTER II OF THE DISCIPLINE OF 1792.

This division of the new Discipline refers mainly to matters relating to the membership of the Church, as Chapter 1 referred chiefly to the Ministry.

GENERAL RULES.

Section 1 consists of "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies," and corresponds to Section XXXV of 1791. There are, however, a number of changes.

In 1791 the Section opened as follows: "1. Our Society is nothing more than '*a company of men* having the form and seeking the power of godliness, *united in order to pray together, to receive the word of* exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help *each other to work out their salvation.*'"

In 1792 this was preceded by an historical statement, as follows:

In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thence forward they did every week—namely, on *Thursday*, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them; and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

2. This was the rise of the United Societies, first in *Europe* and then in *America*.

This was very much as the Rev. John Wesley wrote the prefatory statement in 1743, but the third person is substituted for the first, and Mr. Wesley's name is introduced. Mr. Wesley wrote: "Eight or ten persons came to me;" but the Discipline of 1792 has "came to Mr. Wesley." Mr. Wesley wrote: "They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them;" but the Discipline of 1792 had "that he would spend some time with them." Mr. Wesley wrote: "I appointed," "I gave," and "I judged;" while the Discipline of 1792 inserted "he" instead of "I."

So Wesley wrote, "This was the rise of the United Societies, first in *London*, and then in other places;" but the Discipline of 1792 modified this, in view of the spread of the

societies, and made it read, "This was the rise of the United Society, first in *Europe* and then in *America*."

The form of 1791, "Our society is nothing more than," was changed back to the form Wesley had used, so that it became, in 1792, "Such a society is no other than a company," etc., and this was inserted as part of the new second paragraph in 1792, thus conforming to the form Wesley used in 1743.

Under the duty of the leader, the Discipline of 1791 had: "To inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, or will not be reproved." In 1792 the last "or" was changed to "and"—"that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved," again making the language conform to that used by Wesley in 1743.

In 1791 the Rules said: "There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, *a desire to flee from the wrath to come: i. e., a desire to be saved from their sins.*" The Discipline of 1792 changed the latter part so as to read, "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins."

In 1791 there was the following prohibition against "the buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them." The General Conference of 1792 omitted "the bodies and souls," so that the rule became, "the buying or selling of men, women, or children, with the intention to enslave them."

Among the specified duties in 1791 was that of "buying one of another (unless you can be better served elsewhere)." In 1792 the parenthetical clause was taken out, so that the rule presented the unqualified duty of "buying one of another."

In the closing paragraph of 1791 was the form: "And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart." In 1792 this became: "And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts." No other changes were made in the Rules in 1792.

CLASS-MEETINGS.

Section II, "Of Class-meetings," in 1792, is, with a few exceptions, the same as Section VIII of the Discipline of 1791. Under Question 1 in 1791, "How may the leaders of classes

be rendered more useful?" the third answer was: "Let the leaders converse with the elder and deacon frequently and freely." In 1792 this became: "Let the leaders converse with those who have charge of their circuits frequently and freely."

The fourth question, "How shall we be more strict in receiving and excluding members?" was followed in 1791 by the answer: "In large societies we may read the names of those that are received and excluded, once a quarter." This, in 1792, became: "The official minister or preacher shall, at every quarterly-meeting, read the names of those that are received and excluded."

In 1791 the answer to "Quest. 5. What shall we do with those members of society who willfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class?" was: "1. Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers, visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect, viz., exclusion. 2. If they do not amend, let the elder exclude them in the society; showing that they are laid aside for a breach of our rules of discipline, and not for immoral conduct." In 1792 the second part was slightly amended, so as to read: "If they do not amend, let him who has the charge of the circuit exclude them in the society," etc.

BAND SOCIETIES.

Section III, "Of the Band Societies," in the Discipline of 1792, takes the place of Section IX of 1791.

The prefatory statement in 1791 was as follows: "Two, three, or four true believers, who have full confidence in each other, form a band. Only it is to be observed, that in one of these bands, all must be men, or all women; and all married or all single." This is repeated in 1792, with a slight alteration, and that is striking out of the word "full," so that "who have full confidence in each other" was changed to "who have confidence in each other."

In 1791 the first paragraph read: "The design of our meeting is to obey that command of God, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed.*" In 1792 the Scriptural quotation was made to con-

form to the Authorized Version by changing "you" to "ye"—"that ye may be healed," and the quotation was located by adding, "Jam. v, 16."

The declaration which followed in 1791, "To this end, we intend," was changed to read, "To this end, we agree."

The third agreement, namely, "To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour with singing or prayer" was changed in 1792 to: "To begin exactly at the hour with singing or prayer."

The fourth agreement: "To speak, each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting," was modified so that "the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed" became: "the faults we have committed in tempers, words, or actions."

The eleventh question in 1791 was: "Is it your desire and design to be on this and all other occasions entirely open, so as to speak every thing that is in your heart, without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?" was in 1792 modified by eliminating: "every thing that is in your heart, without exception."

The direction: "Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion offers: The five following at every meeting," was altered by substituting "as occasion requires" for "as occasion offers" and "The four following" was substituted for "The five following." The change to four was made necessary by striking out the fifth of this series of questions: "Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?"

The second of the four questions which must be asked "at every meeting," namely, "What temptations have you met with?" became, in 1792, "What particular temptations have you met with?" The third question: "How was you delivered?" became: "How were you delivered?"

Under the heading: "Directions *given to the* Band Societies. December 25, 1744," a number of changes were made. The fourth item under the direction "Carefully to abstain from doing evil," namely, "To pawn nothing," was taken out in 1792.

Taking out the fourth item reduced the points from seven to six and necessitated a corresponding change in the numbering. The former "7. To use no needless self-indulgence; such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a physician," was shortened into: "6. To use no needless self-indulgence."

Under the duty "Zealously to maintain good works," 1791 had as the first specification: "To *give alms* of such things as you possess, and that to the utmost of your power," became, in 1792, "To *give* alms of such things as you possess, and that according to your ability."

Among the directions "Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God" the first had been in the Discipline of 1791: "To be at Church, and at the Lord's table every week, and at every public meeting of the bands." In 1792 it was amended and appeared as follows: "To be at Church, and at the Lord's table, and at every public meeting of the bands, at every opportunity."

The second item under that head in 1791 was "To attend the ministry of the word every morning, unless distance, business or sickness prevent" was eliminated.

The former: "4. To read the Scriptures, and meditate thereon at every vacant hour," was changed to: "3. Frequently to read the Scriptures, and meditate thereon."

PRIVILEGES GRANTED TO NON-MEMBERS.

Section IV, "Of the Privileges Granted to Serious Persons that are not of the Society," is almost exactly the same as Section XXIV of the Discipline of 1791. There was only one modification, and that was in the last clause: "unless he becomes a member" was changed to "unless he become a member."

The rule as to admitting such strangers to the meetings of the society was: "At every other meeting of the society in every place, let no stranger be admitted. At other times they may; but the same persons not above twice or thrice."

As to their attendance at the love-feasts, the following was the rule: "Let them be admitted with the utmost caution; and the same person on no account above twice or thrice, unless he become a member."

STEWARDS.

Section V, "Of the Qualification and Duty of the Stewards of Circuits" of 1792 is the equivalent of Section XXXIV of the Discipline of 1791, but a number of changes were made. The former title was simply: "Of the Qualification and Duty of Stewards." The old: "Quest. 2. What is the Duty of Stewards?" became: "What are the Duties of the Stewards?"

The answer to this question in 1791 was:

To take an exact account of all the money, or other provision made for and received by any traveling or local Preacher in the circuit; to make an accurate return of every expenditure of money, whether to the Preacher, to the sick, or the poor; to seek the needy and distressed, in order to relieve and comfort them; to inform the Preachers of any sick or disorderly persons; to tell the Preachers what they think wrong in them; to attend the quarterly meetings of their circuit; to give advice, if asked, in planning the circuit; to attend committees for the application of money to churches; to give counsel in matters of arbitration; to provide elements for the Lord's Supper; to write circular letters to the societies in the circuit to be more liberal, if need be; as also to let them know the state of the temporalities at the last quarterly meeting; to register the marriages and baptisms, and to be subject to the Bishops, the presiding Elder of their district, and the Elder, Deacon and Traveling Preachers of their circuit.

In 1792 the words: "made for and received by any traveling or local Preacher in the circuit" were taken out and instead were inserted the words: "collected for the support of Preachers in the circuit," and the words: "as also to let them know the state of the temporalities at the last quarterly meeting" were changed so as to read: "as also to let them know, when occasion requires, the state of the temporal concerns at the last quarterly meeting."

IMPROPER MARRIAGES

Section VI, "Of Unlawful Marriages," in the Discipline of 1792, covers the ground of Section XXI of 1791. In the latter year the first question and answer were: "*Quest.* 1. Do we observe any evil which has lately prevailed among our societies? *Answ.* Many of our members have married with *un-*

awakened persons. This has produced bad effects: they have been either hindered for life, or turned back to perdition." In 1792 "or turned back to perdition" was slightly changed so as to read: "or have turned back to perdition."

The only other change is the addition of the explanatory note at the end of the section as follows: "*N. B.* By the word *unawakened*, as used above, we mean one whom we could not in conscience admit into society."

DRESS.

Section VII, "Of Dress," is substantially the same as Section XXIII of 1791; which was against "superfluity of apparel" and "superfluous ornaments." It was amended in two particulars; first, "Let every Deacon read the thoughts upon dress, at least once a year in every large society," was changed to: "Let every one who has the charge of a circuit, read the thoughts upon dress, at least once a year in every large society;" and, second, "Allow of no exempt case, not even of a married woman: Better one suffer than many," became: "Allow of no exempt case: Better one suffer than many."

TRIAL OF MEMBERS.

Section VIII, "Of Bringing to Trial, Finding Guilty, and Reproving, Suspending, or Excluding Disorderly Persons from Society and Church Privileges," takes the place of Section XXXII, of the Discipline of 1791. The old title was: "Of Bringing to Trial, Finding Guilty, Reproving, Suspending, and Excluding," etc. This was corrected by inserting "and" before "reproving" and substituting "or" for "and" before "excluding."

In the answer to the question: "How shall the suspected member be brought to trial?" a number of alterations were made. "Let the accused and accuser be brought face to face; if this can not be done, let the next best evidence be procured" was slightly modified by inserting "but" so that it read: "but if this can not be done let the next best evidence be procured."

"If the accused person be found guilty, and the crime be such as is expressly forbidden by the word of God, sufficient

to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, and to make him a subject of wrath and hell, let him be expelled," was amended by striking out the words, "let him be expelled," and inserting in their place, "let the Minister or Preacher who has the charge of the circuit, expel him." In this connection, the sentence, "And without evident marks and fruits of repentance, such offenders shall be solemnly disowned before the Church," was stricken out. The rule that "witnesses from without shall not be rejected, if a majority believe them to be honest men," was amended by eliminating the words, "if a majority believe them to be honest men."

In cases of alleged neglect of duty, and of "indulging in sinful tempers and words," the law of 1791 read: "First, let private reproof be given by a Leader or Preacher." In the new law the order was transposed to "a Preacher or Leader." "If there be an acknowledgment of the fault" became "and if there be an acknowledgment of the fault." "On a second offense, a Preacher may take one or two faithful friends," was made to read: "The Preacher or Leader may take one or two faithful friends." "On a third failure, if the transgression be increased or continued," was amended by striking out "failure," and inserting "offense," and striking out the words, "if the transgession be increased or continued." "Let it be brought before the society or a select number" became, "Let the case be brought before the society or a select number." "If there be no sign of humiliation, and the Church is dishonored, the offender must be cut off," was changed to read: "If there be no sign of real humiliation, the offender must be cut off."

In the reference to an appeal: "If there be a murmur or complaint that justice is not done, the person shall be allowed an appeal to the quarterly meeting, and have his case reconsidered before a Bishop, Presiding Elder, or Deacon, with the Preachers, Stewards, and Leaders who may be present," was made to read: "If there be a murmur or complaint from any excluded person in any of the above-mentioned instances that justice has not been done, he shall be allowed an appeal to the next quarterly meeting; and the majority of the Ministers, Traveling and Local Preachers, Exhorters, Stewards, and Leaders, present shall finally determine the case."

"After such forms of trial and expulsion, such persons as are thus excommunicated shall have no privileges of society and sacrament in our Church, without contrition, confession, and proper trial," was changed to, "After such forms of trial and expulsion, such persons shall have no privileges of society or of sacraments in our Church, without contrition, confession, and proper trial."

In 1792 a new law was placed at the end of the section, in the following form: "N. B. If a member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending shall first be reproved by the senior Minister or Preacher of his circuit; and, if he afterwards persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled the society."

This section marks the end of the second chapter division of the Book of Discipline of 1792.

CHAPTER III OF THE DISCIPLINE OF 1792.

CHURCH ERECTION.

Section I, "Of Building Churches, and the Order to be observed therein," is in lieu of Section XXVII of the Discipline of 1791.

The first answer is the same in both, namely: "Let all our churches be built plain and decent; but not more expensively than is absolutely unavoidable; otherwise the necessity of raising of money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent on them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to Methodist discipline, if not doctrine too."

The next paragraph in 1791: "N. B. 1. That no person shall be eligible as a Trustee to any of our churches or colleges, nor act as a Steward, or Leader, that is not in constant church communion, and a regular leader or member of a class.

"2. That no person that is a Trustee, shall be ejected while he is in joint security for money, unless such relief be given him as is demanded, or the person who makes the loan will accept," was altered in several points. The first "that" was stricken out so that item 1 began: "No person shall be

eligible." The word "schools" was substituted for "colleges." The phrase "nor act as Steward or Leader" was omitted "That is not in constant Church communion, and a regular leader or member of a class" became "who is not a regular member of our society." The first part of the second item: "That no person that is a Trustee" was made to read: "No person who is a Trustee." Then the amended form in 1792 was: "*N. B.* 1. No person shall be eligible as a Trustee to any of our Churches or schools, who is not a regular member of our society.

"2. No person who is a Trustee, shall be ejected while he is joint security for money, unless such relief be given him as is demanded, or the creditor will accept."

The second question and answer in regard to the rule: "Let the men and women sit apart," remained the same.

"Quest. 3. But is there not a worse indecency than this, talking in the congregation, before and after service? How shall this be cured?" was changed to read: "Is there not a great indecency sometimes practiced amongst us; viz., talking in the congregation before and after service? How shall this be cured?"

The answer remained the same in 1792, namely: "Let all the Ministers and Preachers join as one man, and enlarge on the impropriety of talking before or after service; and strongly exhort those that are concerned, to do it no more. In three months, if we are in earnest, this vile practice will be banished out of every Methodist congregation. Let none stop till he has carried his point."

THE PRINTING OF BOOKS.

Section II, "Of the Printing of Books, and the Application of the Profits arising therefrom," covers the subject contained in Section XXXI of the Book of Discipline of 1791. Title is exactly the same, but the body of the section is very different.

The old law was as follows:

As it has been frequently recommended by the Preachers and people, that such books as are wanted, be printed in this country—we therefore propose:

1. That the advice of the Conference shall be desired concerning

any valuable impression, and their consent be obtained, before any steps be taken for the printing thereof.

2. That the profits of the books, after all the necessary expenses are defrayed, shall be applied, as the Bishop and Council shall direct.

The three paragraphs just quoted, which constituted the old section, were completely eliminated, and new matter inserted as follows:

1. Who is employed to manage the printing business?

Answ. John Dickins.

Quest. 2. What allowance shall be paid him annually for his services?

Answ. 1. 200 dollars, for a dwelling-house and for a book-room.

2. 80 dollars for a boy.

3. 53 dollars 1–3, for fire wood; and,

4. 333 dollars to clothe and feed himself, his wife, and his children. In all, 666 dollars 1–3.

Quest. 3. What powers shall be grant him?

Answ. 1. To regulate the publications according to the state of the finances.

2. To determine, with the approbation of the Book Committee, on the amount of the draughts which may be drawn from time to time on the Book Fund.

3. To complain to the District Conferences, if any Preachers shall neglect to make due payment for books.

4. To publish from time to time such books or treatises as he and the other members of the Book Committee shall unanimously judge proper.

Quest. 4. Who shall form the Book Committee?

Answ. John Dickins, Henry Willis, Thomas Haskins, and the Preacher who is stationed in Philadelphia from time to time.

Quest. 5. How much shall be annually allowed out of the Book Fund for Cokesbury College, till the next General Conference?

Answ. Eight hundred dollars, for the ensuing year; and one thousand and sixty-six dollars and two-thirds, for each of the remaining three years.

Quest. 6. What directions shall be given, concerning the application of the money allowed as above for Cokesbury College?

Answ. The money shall be applied as follows:

1. For the education and board of the boys that are now on the charitable part of the foundation. But no boy shall be again placed on the charity till the next General Conference.

2. The surplus of the money, after the charity is supplied, shall be from time to time appropriated to the payment of the debt of the college, and to the finishing of the building, under the direction of the Bishop and the Committee of Safety.

N. B. The present debt of the college is about eleven hundred dollars. The present expense of the charity is about nine hundred and sixty-three dollars annually; but this will probably sink into less than one-half before the next General Conference.

Quest. 7. What sum of money shall be allowed distressed Preachers out of the Book Fund, till the next General Conference?

Answ. 266 dollars and 1-3 per annum.

Quest. 8. How is the money mentioned above, for the benefit of distressed Preachers, to be drawn out of the Book Fund?

Answ. By the Bishop, according to the united judgment of himself and the District Conferences.

Quest. 9. What shall be allowed the Bishop out of the Book Fund, for the benefit of district schools, till the next General Conference?

Answ. 64 dollars per annum.

Quest. 10. How shall the surplus of the Book Fund be applied, till the next General Conference, after the provisions above mentioned are made?

Answ. To the forming of a capital stock for the carrying on of the concerns of the books.

THE COKESBURY COLLEGE.

Section III, "Of the Plan of Education Established in Cokesbury College," is mainly the same as Section XXX of the Discipline of 1791. In 1792, under the heading, there was inserted the address, "To the Public, and to the Members of our Society in particular."

The former statement, "It is to receive for education and board the sons of the Elders and Preachers of the Methodist Church, poor orphans, and the sons of the subscribers and of other friends," was amended by the insertion of the word Deacons, so that that part read, "the sons of the Elders, Deacons, and Preachers."

The announcement that: "A teacher of the languages, with an assistant, will be provided," was amended by changing "with an assistant" so as to read: "with two assistants." The further announcement that there would be "also an English master, to teach with the utmost propriety both to read and speak in the English language," was slightly changed by taking out the word "in." "To lay before our friends the intent of the College," was made to read, "To lay before our friends the plan of the Institution."

Referring to employment in agriculture as one of the recrea-

tions in lieu of play, the Discipline of 1791 said: "In conformity to this sentiment, one of the completest poetic pieces of antiquity (the *Georgics of Virgil*) is written on the subject of husbandry; by the perusal of which, and submission to the above regulations, the students delightfully unite the theory and practice together." This was subjected to a single amendment, which has the insertion of the word "may" before the word "delightfully," so that the clause read: "the students may delightfully unite the theory and practice together."

"The four guineas a year for tuition, we are persuaded, can not be lowered, if we give the students that finished education which we are determined they shall have," became, "The eighteen dollars and two-thirds per annum for tuition," etc.

Several changes were made in the part entitled, "*General* Rules *Concerning the* College." Thus instead of "two tutors" the revised law had "three tutors." "The price of education shall be four guineas" became: "The price of education shall be eighteen dollars and two-thirds."

The following new rule was adopted: "The rate of boarding in the college shall be sixty dollars per annum." This was numbered 5, and was followed by an explanatory note: "N. B. The enhanced price of several of the necessaries of life has obliged us to raise the rate of boarding."

The only other changes in the "*General* Rules *Concerning the* College" was the change of the spelling of "cloathed" in the sixth and seventh rules to "clothed."

The "Rules *for the Economy of the* College *and* Students" underwent some amendment. The twenty-seventh rule, 1791, read: "If a student be convicted of any open sin, he shall for the first offense, be reproved in private; for the second offense, he shall be reproved in public; and for the third offense, he shall be punished at the discretion of the President; if incorrigible, he shall be expelled." The concluding words, "if incorrigible, he shall be expelled," were stricken out in 1792, probably because the next rule provided for expulsion.

The thirty-first and thirty-second rules of 1791 were as follows:

31. The President shall be the judge of all the crimes and punishments, in the absence of the Bishops.

32. But the President shall have no power to expel a student without the advice and consent of three of the Trustees; but a Bishop shall have that power.

The rules were amended and combined in the following rule:

31. The President shall be the judge of all crimes and punishments, in the absence of the Bishops and the Presiding Elder; and with the concurrence of two of the tutors, shall have power to dismiss a student, if he judge it highly necessary, for any criminal conduct, or for refusing to submit to the discipline of the College; or to such punishment as the President and Tutors judge he deserves.

The thirty-second and last of these rules of 1792 was new. It was:

32. A Committee of five respectable friends, entitled *The Committee of Safety*, shall be appointed, who shall meet once in every fortnight. Three of these, meeting at the appointed time, shall be sufficient to enter upon business, and shall have full power to inspect and regulate the whole Economy of the College, and to examine the characters and conduct of all the servants, and to fix their wages, and change them as they may think proper. The Committee shall determine every thing by a majority.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Section IV, "Of Christian Perfection," is essentially the same as Section XXII of the Discipline of 1791; but in 1792 some changes were made. The old title of the section was merely "Of Perfection." In 1792 the qualifying word "Christian" was inserted, so that it became: "Of Christian Perfection."

The former statement: "We all agree to defend it, meaning thereby (as we did from the beginning) salvation from all sin, by the love of God and man filling our heart," became in 1792: "We all agree to defend it, meaning thereby (as we did from the beginning) salvation from all sin, properly so-called, by the love of God and man filling our heart."

"The papists say" became "Some say," "Some professors say" became "Others say," and the following "Others say" became "But others say."

The passage: "We are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin before death, properly so-called, sinful tempers, but we can not always speak or think or act aright, as dwelling in houses

of clay," was amended by striking out "properly so-called," by striking out, "but we can not always speak or think or act aright, as dwelling in houses of clay," and "i. e. from all" was inserted before the words "sinful tempers" and the words "and desires" after "tempers," so that it read: "We are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin before death, i. e. from all sinful tempers and desires."

ANTINOMIANISM.

Section V, "Against Antinomianism," is the same as Section XVI of the Discipline of 1791, excepting that the passage, "Labour (*ergazesthe*), literally, *work for* the meat that endureth to everlasting life," is slightly changed by putting the word *ergazesthe* into Greek characters, so that the paragraph read: "2. With regard to working for life, which our Lord expressly commands us to do. Labour (εργαζεσθε), literally, *work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life* And in fact, every believer, till he come to glory, works for, as well as from life."

PREDESTINATION.

Section VI, on the "Scripture Doctrine of Predestination, Election, and Reprobation," is exactly the same as Section XXXVII in the Book of Discipline for 1791. It is a doctrinal treatise covering more than thirteen pages.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF BELIEVERS.

Section VII, "Serious Thoughts on the Infallible, Unconditional Perseverance of all that have once Experienced Faith in Christ," is a tract of almost sixteen pages, and is the same as Section XXXVIII of the Discipline of 1791.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Section VIII, "Of Christian Perfection. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, by the Rev. John Wesley," is Wesley's treatise on Christian Perfection. It covers almost sixty pages, and is the same as Section XXXIX of the Discipline of 1791.

BAPTISM.

Section IX, "Of Baptism. An Extract on the Nature and Subjects of Christian Baptism," is a treatise covering some sixty-eight pages. It is divided into two parts: "The First

Part—On the Nature of Christian Baptism," and "The Second Part—On the Subjects of Baptism." It is the same as Section XL of 1791, the only variation being that *baptizo* was put into Greek letters—*βαπτιζω*.

RITUAL—SACRAMENTAL, ORDINATION, AND OTHER SERVICES.

Section X, "Sacramental Services," etc., had no place in the Book of Discipline of 1791. The forms of service had heretofore appeared in the Service Book, called "The Sunday Service and Other Occasional Services for the Use of the Methodists in America," which Mr. Wesley had prepared in 1784. In 1792 they were for the first time inserted in the Book of Discipline.

The section contains the following services: "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper," "The Ministration of Baptism of Infants," "The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years," "The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony," "The Order for the Burial of the Dead," and "The Form and Manner of Making and Ordaining of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons," including "The Form and Manner of Making Deacons," "The Form and Manner of Ordaining of Elders," and "The Form of Ordaining a Bishop."

ARTICLES OF RELIGION.

The Articles of Religion appeared as Section XXXVI in the Discipline of 1791; but in the Discipline of 1792 they were placed as Section II of the first chapter. They were unchanged except by the correction of a couple of typographical errors which had crept into the Discipline of 1791 in Article "XIV. Of Purgatory." In the edition of 1791 occurred the phrase: "as well of imagesdas of reliques." This plainly was a misprint, and was corrected to read: "as well of images as of reliques." So in the same article there appeared: "and also invocation of saints, is a fon thing vainly invented." The letter "d" had dropped out. In 1792 the missing letter was supplied so that it read: "is a fond thing vainly invented."

HISTORICAL STATEMENTS.

In the Book of Discipline for 1791 there were two sections which presented brief statements as to the origin of the Methodist Episcopal Church and of the authority of its episcopacy.

The first appeared as Section II of the Discipline of 1791 with the title: "Of the Nature and Constitution of our Church." It was as follows: "We are thoroughly convinced that the Church of England, to which we have been united, is deficient in several of the most important parts of Christian discipline; and that (a few ministers and members excepted) it has lost the life and power of religion. We are not ignorant of the spirit and designs it has ever discovered in Europe; of rising to pre-eminence and worldly dignities by virtue of a national establishment, and by the most servile devotion to the will of temporal governors; and we fear the same spirit will lead the same Church in these United States (although altered in its name) to similar designs and attempts, if the number and strength of its members will ever afford a probability of success; and particularly, to obtain a national establishment, which we cordially abhor as the great bane of truth and holiness, and consequently a great impediment to the progress of vital Christianity.

"For these reasons, we have thought it our duty to form ourselves into an independent church. And as the most excellent mode of church-government, according to our maturest judgment, is that of *a moderate episcopacy;* and as we are persuaded, *that the uninterrupted succession of Bishops from the Apostles* can be proved neither from scripture nor antiquity; we therefore have constituted ourselves into an *Episcopal church*, under the direction of *Bishops*, *Elders*, *Deacons*, *and Preachers*, according to the forms of ordination annexed to our prayer-book, and the regulations laid down in the form of discipline."

This was followed by "Section III. Of the constituting of Bishops, and their Duty."

Under this head the first question and answer were as follows:

Quest. 1. What is the proper origin of the episcopal authority in our Church?

Answ. In the year 1784 the Rev. John Wesley, who, under God, has been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth by the means of the Methodists, determined at the intercession of multitudes of his spiritual children on this continent, to ordain ministers for America, and for this purpose sent over three regularly ordained clergy; but preferring the episcopal mode of church-government to any other, he solemnly set apart, by the imposition of his hands and prayer, one of them, viz., Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus-College, in the university of Oxford, for the episcopal office; and having delivered to him letters of episcopal orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart Francis Asbury, then general assistant of the Methodist society in America, for the same episcopal office, he the said Francis Asbury being first ordained deacon and elder. In consequence of which the said Francis Asbury was solemnly set apart for the said episcopal office by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the said Thomas Coke, other regularly ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the general conference, held at Baltimore, did unanimously receive the said Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as their bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their episcopal ordination.

In the Discipline of 1792 these statements do not appear as two separate sections; but, with some changes, are condensed into one section, and appear as the first section of the first chapter, as follows:

SECTION I.

Of the Origin of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Preachers and Members of our Society in general, being convinced that there was a great deficiency of vital religion in the Church of England in America, and being in many places destitute of the Christian sacraments, as several of the Clergy had forsaken their churches, requested the late Rev. *John Wesley* to take such measures in his wisdom and prudence as would afford them suitable relief in their distress.

In consequence of this, our venerable friend, who, under God, had been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth by the means of the Methodists, determined to ordain ministers for America; and for this purpose, in the year 1784, sent over three regularly ordained clergy; but preferring the episcopal mode of church-government to any other, he solemnly set apart, by

the imposition of his hands and prayer, one of them, viz., *Thomas Coke*, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus-College in the university of Oxford, and a Presbyter of the Church of England, for the episcopal office; and having delivered to him letters of episcopal orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart *Francis Asbury*, then general assistant of the Methodist society in America, for the same episcopal office, he the said *Francis Asbury* being first ordained deacon and elder. In consequence of which the said *Francis Asbury* was solemnly set apart for the said episcopal office, by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the said *Thomas Coke*, other regularly ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the general conference, held at Baltimore, did unanimously receive the said *Thomas Coke* and *Francis Asbury* as their bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their episcopal ordination.

With the exception of the table of contents, this ended the Discipline of 1792.

ADJOURNMENT.

The General Conference of 1792 remained in session fifteen full days. Having completed its work, it adjourned in the evening of Thursday, the fifteenth of November, and that night Bishop Coke preached on "Pure Religion and Undefiled."

Thus ended this most important General Conference.

1796.

THE General Conference of 1796 met in the city of Baltimore, on Thursday, October 20th. Of two hundred and ninety-three preachers belonging to the Connexion, only one hundred and twenty were in attendance, though two hundred and twenty-nine were entitled to membership in that body. No list was kept of the preachers present, but the majority of them were from the nearer circuits and districts.

Those who composed the Conference were well trained in Methodism, and spent no time in "contentions and strivings about the law." Their single aim was to promote the interests of the Church, the spiritual welfare of its members, and the glory of God. Bishops Coke and Asbury presided. The session was one of great harmony, and continued for two weeks, adjourning on November 3d. The principal subjects which demanded attention were the proper support of the ministry, the number of yearly conferences to be held, the titles to Church property, and the employment of local preachers.

During this session, as in the previous one, the religious element was prominent, and through the preaching of the bishops and the other ministers, many souls were awakened and converted. God abundantly blessed the labors of his servants to the people of Baltimore, and the results were seen after many days.

Dr. Coke brought with him from the British Conference an affectionate address to "the General Conference of the people called Methodists, in America," to which an answer was prepared, to be presented by the same messenger on his return to England. Both Conferences rejoiced in the instruments chosen by infinite Wisdom to carry on the work, and rejoiced that God had raised up their late father in the gospel, the Reverend John Wesley, to organize a new society of faithful men to promote the revival of religion among the people. The American brethren say:

"We admire with you the method God is taking to beat down the pride of philosophy, even by choosing the foolish things of the

world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and this is agreeable to the method of God's proceedings in the purest times of Christianity. At the same time the Lord has not left us without men, who, when necessary, are able to contend against that vain philosophy with its own weapons of logical arguments, and with success; though we are sensible how far we are inferior to you, our elder brethren, in this respect."

The number of annual conferences was limited to six, though the bishops, if they should deem it necessary, were authorized to form a seventh in the province of Maine. Heretofore the number of yearly conferences to be held was indefinite. These conferences were sometimes very meager, consisting of the preachers of a single district only, or of one or two small ones. Thus in 1789 Bishop Asbury held eleven conferences, and in 1790, fourteen; in 1791 he held thirteen, and in 1792, seventeen. In 1793, there were twenty, and the next year, fourteen; but in 1795, the number fell to seven. To hold such small conferences, says the Journal, "was attended with many inconveniences; 1. There were but few of the senior preachers whose years and experience had matured their judgments, who could be present at any one conference; 2. The conferences wanted that dignity which every religious synod should possess, and which always accompanies a large assembly of gospel ministers; 3. The itinerant plan was exceedingly cramped, from the difficulty of removing preachers from one district to another." To these considerations the Conference adds a fourth: "that the active, zealous, unmarried preachers may move on a larger scale, and preach the ever-blessed gospel far more extensively through the sixteen states, and other parts of the continent; whilst the married preachers, whose circumstances require them in many instances to be more located than the single men, will have a considerable field of action opened to them, and also the bishops will be able to attend the conferences with greater ease, and without injury to their health."

The six yearly conferences thus established by the General Conference were as follows: 1. The New England Conference, covering all of New England and New York east of the Hudson river. 2. Philadelphia, covering the remainder of New York, and all of Pennsylvania east of the Susquehannah river,

the state of Delaware, and all the rest of the Peninsula. 3. The Baltimore, covering the remainder of Maryland and the northern neck of Virginia. 4. The Virginia, for all that part of Virginia which lies on the south side of the Rappahannock river, and that part of North Carolina lying on the north side of Cape Fear river, including also the circuits situated on the branches of the Yadkin. 5. The South Carolina, embracing South Carolina, Georgia, and the remainder of North Carolina. 6. The Western, for the states of Kentucky and Tennessee.

From this review it will be seen how widely the work of the itinerancy extended; and yet it was foreseen that it would grow within these limits, and expand even beyond them. Hence the Conference added a proviso, "that the bishops shall have authority to appoint other yearly conferences in the interval of the General Conference, if a sufficiency of new circuits be anywhere formed for that purpose." The work did, indeed, spread; and in less than two years it had entered the territory northwest of the Ohio, and covered portions of the states not hitherto occupied. Seven conferences were held in 1798, and the same number in 1799, in which year there were 272 preachers in the Connexion. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

Several alterations were made in the form of Discipline, and some new regulations added. It was determined that the conferences which had heretofore been called "district conferences," though they were held only once a year, should be known as "yearly conferences." The preachers on trial were to continue on their circuits during the times when these annual conferences sat, so as not to leave the people without the services of the Church, and none were to attend the conference, however near, except those who were in full connexion, or who were about to be so received.

For the first time the Conference caused to be inserted in the Discipline a form of deed for conveying and securing Church property. This form was intended to be applicable in all the states, subject to such modifications as the separate state laws might require. The Conference directed that it should be provided in every deed, charter or conveyance, that the trustees of all our meeting-houses permit such ministers and

preachers belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church, as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference of the ministers of the Church, or by the annual conferences, to preach and expound God's holy word, to execute the discipline of the Church and to administer the sacraments therein, according to the true meaning and purport of the deed of settlement; that is, the instrument by which the property is conveyed to the trustees.

At this Conference it was thought by many that the number of the bishops should be increased, for the more perfect oversight of the Methodist societies. Dr. Coke had given very little of his time to this work, and he was not naturalized as a citizen. His visits to the conferences were casual and irregular; and when he was present, the responsibility of stationing the preachers on their circuits devolved wholly on Bishop Asbury. For this reason the Conference voted that one more bishop was necessary; but a difficulty arose as to the manner of his appointment. Richard Whatcoat had previously been designated by Mr. Wesley as a joint superintendent with Francis Asbury; but the American preachers had never accepted him as such, nor was Dr. Coke allowed to ordain him. In this emergency, and before the matter was settled, Dr. Coke begged that the business might be laid over half a day. This was accordingly done; and when the Conference again assembled, the Doctor in a written communication offered himself to the American Connexion, if the brethren saw fit to take him, as a permanent superintendent.

The Conference agreed to Dr. Coke's proposal, and concluded, if he tarried with them, that there would be no need of another bishop, and so let the question drop. That the Doctor made this offer in good faith, there can be no doubt; but circumstances abroad prevented his carrying out his design to give his "talents and labors in every respect, without any mental reservation whatsoever, to labor among them, and to assist Bishop Asbury."

Provision was made for the distressed traveling preachers, for their families, and for superannuated and worn-out preachers, and the widows and orphans of deceased preachers, by establishing what is now known as the "Chartered Fund."

The support of the traveling preachers at the best was scanty, for the allowance made to them was only sixty-four dollars a year; and hence in all the early conferences we find so many names enrolled in answer to the question, "Who desist from traveling in connexion with or under the direction of our conference?" or, "Who are under a location through weakness of body or family concerns?" Two years before this Conference twenty-eight preachers are so reported, and in 1795 thirty-two are reported as located. Many of these returned to the traveling ranks when their temporal circumstances improved, or their health was restored.

The Conference elected nine trustees for the fund above named, and authorized them to effect an organization and procure a charter from the legislature of Pennsylvania. They were directed to hold an annual meeting for the transaction of their business in Philadelphia, or at such other place as a majority of them might judge most convenient and proper, and to fix the time thereof. This fund became the means of furnishing relief to many who were otherwise ill supported, and the friends of the Church willingly contributed towards it. Several thousand dollars were in a short time subscribed and paid in, and a few valuable legacies were left to it. During the hundred years of its existence it has accomplished great good; but the fund ought to be many times larger than it is to accomplish fully the end of its organization.

As the *Arminian Magazine*, two volumes of which were printed in Philadelphia in 1789 and 1790, was discontinued for want of patronage, the Conference felt that there ought to be some method of propagating religious knowledge in print more largely than by books. It therefore recommended that a new monthly periodical be established, to be called *The Methodist Magazine*, to consist of compilations from the British magazines and of original accounts of the experience of pious persons. In accordance with this recommendation, the Book-steward, John Dickins, began the new publication, and issued two volumes, when the enterprise failed for the same reason as the previous venture had failed. Evidently the time had not come when such a publication could be supported. It certainly was not that our people were less intellectual than at present;

but mail facilities were few and money was scarce, except in the larger towns and in the cities.

In the matter of education great interest was taken. Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury were both good scholars, the latter carrying with him his Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament, that he might study them at spare moments on his journeys; and almost the first thing they did after Dr. Coke's arrival in America in 1784 was to consult together about the establishment of a school or college for the training of Methodist youth. John Dickins, an Eton scholar, had urged this several years previously. At the Christmas Conference of that year a plan was devised for erecting such a college, and a prospectus was published over the signatures of the two bishops, asking for contributions and gifts towards the object. The school was established at Abingdon, Md., and was known as Cokesbury College, so named after its two founders. A subscription of over one thousand pounds sterling—(money was still reckoned mostly after the English method)—had already been secured. The building was erected of brick on a commanding site, containing six acres of ground, and was one hundred and eight feet in length by forty in breadth from north to south. As soon as the house was in order for the school to begin, even before any of the rooms were finished, a few scholars were collected, and a master provided to teach them. At first the institution was managed by the Conference; but it was afterward incorporated, and trustees appointed to care for it.

The institution was prosperous, and good work was done in it. The rules established by the Conference for its government were of the most ascetic order,—the only recreations allowed the boys being gardening, walking, riding, and bathing under open skies in a convenient pool, but not in the river. They were also allowed to work in a wood-manufacturing shop at carpenter's, joiner's, cabinet-maker's, or turner's business. Their hours of sleeping, eating, worship, study, rest, and reciting were all fixed. With all the restrictions imposed upon them, the boys were cheerful and happy, and benefited by the training they received.

The school continued in operation for ten years, when the

building was unfortunately burned. It had been a source of anxiety and trouble to Bishop Asbury to support it, and though its structure and maintenance had cost ten thousand pounds, the bishop declared that he would not go through the same vexations with regard to it again for that much a year. The work of the Church was felt to be rather the evangelization of the people than the instruction of their youth, though the latter was not neglected because of the misfortune at Cokesbury. Schools were planted in Georgia, Kentucky, and elsewhere, and colleges and universities followed in due time.

With regard to local preachers, it was ordered that no one should receive a license to preach until he had been examined and approved at the quarterly meeting of his circuit. He was also to bring a recommendation from the society of which he was a member, and after he had preached for four years from the time of his receiving license, he was eligible to the office of a deacon. A local preacher employed to fill the place of a traveling preacher was to receive for his service a sum proportionable to the salary of the traveling preacher. If brought to trial for any misdemeanor, heresy, or alleged immorality, he was to be tried by a committee of local preachers; or, for want of local preachers, exhorters or class-leaders. If found guilty by the committee, and in consequence suspended, his case was to be referred to the ensuing quarterly meeting; and if this meeting should deem the said local preacher, deacon, or elder culpable, the next quarterly meeting thereafter was to proceed with his trial, and have authority to clear, censure, suspend, or expel him according to their judgment. In case of condemnation, he was allowed an appeal to the next annual conference. The Conference says in its minutes:

"By this mode of trial, we are desirous of showing the most tender regard towards our local brethren. We are all but men. The best of us may fall into sin, or be drawn into dangerous and pernicious errors, and it is sometimes necessary to stop the plague by an immediate stroke of discipline. But we would not have so important a character as that of one of our local brethren even touched to its disadvantage by only one preacher, who possibly might be younger than the accused. We have therefore provided that a small meeting of respectable persons shall be held before a single step be taken in the business. The trial will then come before the most weighty

assembly in the circuit. We have directed the yearly conference, upon an appeal, to determine upon the merits of the cause, from the memorial of the quarterly meeting, on account of the difficulty, if not the impossibility of bringing the necessary witnesses, perhaps thirty, fifty, or an hundred miles from their home. Nor have we any right or authority to lay such a burden on any of our people. In short, we have done the best we can, according to the nature of the circumstances in which we are placed."

The rule on the subject of marriage was modified, so as not absolutely to prohibit, under penalty of expulsion, any member from marrying a person not awakened, or not a member of the society. If such a person has the form of godliness, and is seeking the power thereof, there is little objection; but if members "marry persons who do not come up to this description, we shall be obliged," says the Conference, "to purge our society of them; and even in a doubtful case, the member of our society shall be put back upon trial."

The Conference adjourned to meet in Baltimore on the 20th of October in the year 1800. The Minutes were printed in the Discipline of 1797, and cover twenty-three pages, 16mo, two of which are occupied by the Pastoral Address.

1800.

THE General Conference for the year 1800 met in Baltimore on Tuesday, May 6th. It had been ordered by the preceding General Conference that this one should convene on the 20th day of October; but as in that month of the year for two or three seasons past the yellow fever had prevailed in Baltimore and other sea-port towns, it was doubtful whether many of the preachers would venture to come together. For this reason Mr. Asbury, by the advice of certain judicious friends, laid the matter before the yearly conferences of 1799, and they decided that it was highly necessary to change the date for meeting, and accordingly fixed it for May 6th.

When the Conference assembled, therefore, the members present at once passed the following resolution, reciting the action just named:

"*Resolved*, That this General Conference, now met according to the above alteration and appointment, do unanimously approve of the said alteration, and ratify it accordingly."

The Conference elected Nicholas Snethen secretary, and passed rules of order for its government. Dr. Coke read an address from the British Conference, and explained the portions of it that related to himself, respecting his return to Europe. He said the address was not his own, and that he was not even consulted in its preparation; he would now leave the decision of the case entirely with the Conference, as he viewed himself only their servant for Jesus' sake.

The request of the British Conference to allow Dr. Coke to return to Europe, after being debated two or three days, was, by a large majority, granted; upon condition that he come back to America as soon as his business would allow, but certainly by the next General Conference.

It appears from the record that Mr. Asbury—the title of Bishop in the earlier days of our Church history was seldom given to the general superintendents in speaking of or addressing them; but only "Mr." or "Bro."—desired to vacate his

office, fearing that the General Conference was not satisfied with his former services. He said that his affliction since the last General Conference had been such that he was under the necessity of having a colleague to travel with him; that his great debility had obliged him to locate several times, and that he could travel only in a carriage; and he did not know whether this General Conference, as a body, were satisfied with such parts of his conduct. Whereupon, on motion of Ezekiel Cooper, it was unanimously

"*Resolved*, 1. That this General Conference consider themselves under many and great obligations to Mr. Asbury for the many and great services he has rendered to this connexion.

"*Resolved*, 2. That this General Conference do earnestly entreat a continuation of Mr. Asbury's services as one of the general superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as far as his strength will permit."

The question of electing an additional bishop came up on motion of William Burke, who advocated the election of two more bishops; but the matter was deferred until it could be ascertained whether Bishop Asbury needed any help, and, if any, what that help should be.

The trustees of the Chartered Fund at Philadelphia presented a report of their doings, together with the accounts of the fund; and Lemuel Green and Henry Foxall were elected trustees in the place of Cornelius Comegys, resigned, and John Dickins, deceased.

A rule of the Discipline, requiring preachers to count the value of presents made to them personally, as a part of their allowance, was by a two-thirds vote stricken out.

From the fact that much time was consumed by the preachers in going to and returning from the General Conference, and in attending its sessions, thus necessitating their absence from their charges from four to six weeks, a motion was made to substitute a delegated Conference instead of a mass General Conference. This motion was promptly negatived.

The motion for assistance to be granted to Mr. Asbury was called up, and divided into two parts for consideration: 1. Shall any assistance be given? and 2. What shall that assistance be? The answer to the first question was in the affirmative; but in

answer to the second question, a very great majority appeared in favor of "one bishop to be elected and ordained."

On motion of Ezekiel Cooper, the election of bishop was ordered to be taken as follows: It was to be by written ballots which were to be deposited by the electors in a box or drawer. The person receiving the greatest number of votes, provided that was a majority of the whole, was the one to be elected. But if there was not a majority of the whole Conference for any one, then the Conference should vote again, and choose by ballot from the four highest on the list. If no one should then have a majority the vote was to be again taken, the ballots being limited to the three highest; and if none of the three was elected, the Conference should vote for the two highest of the three until one should have the majority.

Bishop Asbury was authorized to take with him an elder as a traveling companion and helper, through any part, or all, of his travels. There was a discussion on the authority to belong to the new bishop, and various propositions on the subject were made. Dr. Coke suggested that when Bishop Asbury was absent, the additional bishop should bring into the Conference the list of appointments to be made, and read it, so that he might hear what the preachers had to say, and revise it accordingly. Mr. McClaskey wanted the Conference to determine whether he should be the equal or the subordinate of Bishop Asbury; and Mr. Wells thought he should be aided in making the appointments by a committee of three or four preachers. These various propositions concerning the new bishop were withdrawn by consent, and certain others, such as the length of time required for an elder to travel before he should be eligible to the episcopacy, the requirement that all the bishops should be present at every Conference, and that they shall mutually determine and agree upon their several different routes to the ensuing conference, were voted down. The Conference then proceeded to the election. Upon the first ballot there was found to be a tie vote, and it was therefore supposed to be defective; but upon the second ballot, Richard Whatcoat received 59 votes and Jesse Lee 55, and there was one vote blank; so, the former having received a clear majority of all the ballots, was declared elected. From this vote it ap-

pears that there were at least one hundred and fifteen members of the Conference present.

The salary of the preachers was raised from sixty-four to eighty dollars a year. This amount was exclusive of the sums estimated for the living expenses (travel, house-rent, food, clothing, horse-feed, etc.) of the preacher and his family—always little enough at the best.

The matter of slavery and the condition of the slaves was brought before the Conference; but after due deliberation no new rule was enacted upon the subject; but a committee was appointed to prepare an affectionate address to the Methodist societies in the United States, setting forth the evils of the spirit and practice of slavery, and the importance of doing away the evil, so far as the laws of the respective states would allow;—the said address to be laid before the Conference for their consideration, and, if agreed to by the Conference, to be signed in their behalf by the bishops. A committee was also ordered to be appointed by each of the several annual conferences, to draw up and present to the state legislatures from year to year petitions asking for the gradual abolition of slavery.

Methodist preachers, being often called upon to officiate at marriages, naturally received fees or complimentary presents for their services. The rule in the Discipline respecting "money received by our traveling ministers for marriage fees" was this: "In all circuits where the preachers do not receive their full quarterage, let all such money be given into the hands of the stewards, to be equally divided between the traveling preachers of the circuit. In all other cases the money shall be disposed of at the discretion of the district conference."

This rule was continued, and placed in the section "Of raising Annual Supplies for the Propagation of the Gospel, and for making up the Preachers' Allowance, and to assist in the Support of the Widows and Orphans of Preachers."

It was moved to establish the relation of baptized children to the Church, by admitting them to all the privileges of the same, except the Lord's Supper, until their conduct was such as to be sufficient to exclude them from the society according to the rules. The motion was voted down; but it shows that the

religious welfare of children has ever been a subject of consideration among Methodists.

The method of appointing presiding elders was brought up and discussed. A motion was made that they be elected by the several annual conferences as the bishops were by the General Conference, and this mode of constituting them has always been a moot question; but the motion was negatived. The majority of the earlier preachers thought it wise to leave the appointment in the hands of the bishops. Though in nearly every General Conference since, the election of presiding elders by the conferences has been proposed, it has never been made a rule of our ecclesiastical economy.

The annual allowance for the support of the children of preachers was fixed at sixteen dollars while under the age of seven years, and at twenty-four dollars between seven and fourteen—provided that this rule should not apply to those preachers whose families were cared for by other means in their respective circuits.

The preachers were directed, by a vote of the Conference, to advise the brethren of each circuit to purchase ground and erect thereon a parsonage, furnish it, at least with heavy furniture, and entrust the same to trustees to be appointed by the official members of the quarterly meeting conference, according to the deed of settlement as printed in the Discipline. If not able to build, it was recommended that they at least rent a house for the accommodation of the married preacher and his family.

On motion of Dr. Coke, it was ordered that the same salary that is paid to the effective traveling preachers be paid to the superannuated, worn-out, and supernumerary preachers, and to their wives; and that the widows of those who have died in the work be allowed the same amount.

When a member is tried for any crime or misdemeanor before the society to which he belongs, if the preacher or minister differ in judgment from those who try him, he shall refer the case to the next quarterly meeting conference for final determination.

The number of annual conferences was fixed at seven. A

plan was agreed upon for the raising of supplies for the propagation of the gospel, for the making up of the preachers' allowances, and to assist in the support of the widows and orphans of the preachers. The rules for the government of our seminaries of learning were ordered to be omitted from the Discipline. Cokesbury College had now ceased to exist, and there were no other schools under the control or patronage of the Conference.

On motion of Bishop Asbury, the annual conferences were directed to keep a record of their proceedings, and send a copy of the same to the General Conference. This order is still in force.

It was voted that the next session of the General Conference be held in Baltimore, beginning May 6, 1804.

It was provided that whenever any of our traveling preachers became owners of a slave or slaves, by any means, they should forfeit their ministerial standing in the Church, unless they executed, if practicable, a legal emancipation of such slave or slaves, agreeably to the laws of the state in which they lived.

Ezekiel Cooper was elected superintendent of the book business, and definite regulations were enacted concerning the publication of books, and other matters connected with the enterprise, and also as to the duties of the preachers relative thereto. The Philadelphia Conference was directed to appoint a Book Committee, who were to have general oversight of the publishing interests.

The Discipline underwent a thorough revision, and many verbal changes were made. The Notes of Bishops Coke and Asbury, printed in the Discipline of 1797, were ordered to be omitted, and published in a separate form. This, however, was not done. The Notes were not thought to be valuable, and had little interest for either the preachers or the people.

The Conference adjourned on the 20th of May.

2 year term

1804.

THE General Conference of 1804 met in Baltimore, May 7th. There were seven annual conferences represented, and one hundred and seven preachers present entitled to sit as members. John Wilson was elected secretary. Bishops Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat were the presiding officers, each taking part in the proceedings, offering resolutions, and making speeches as members. The three conferences in the extremities of the work had only twelve representatives, while Baltimore and Philadelphia conferences furnished sixty-seven. The propriety and, indeed, necessity of making some change in the constitution of the Conference, so as to secure a more general and equitable representation, was evident; but no alteration was made in the composition of this body. All preachers who had traveled four years in the ministry from the time they were received on trial in an annual conference were entitled to seats. Those who were near could easily attend; the more distant could come only with difficulty, and the time consumed in traveling to and from the session, together with that spent in the session, left portions of the work unprovided for during many days.

The business of the session was transacted mostly in open conference, very little of it being referred to committees. Dr. Coke, after the reading of fraternal letters from England and Ireland, was granted leave to return to Europe, agreeably to the request of the British Conference, provided that he should hold himself subject to the call of three of the annual conferences, to return to America, when requested by them, and at farthest, if Providence should allow, to the next General Conference.

Several new regulations were made, among them one which required the bishops to allow each annual conference to remain in session a week at least. Prior to this rule, the bishops could adjourn a conference at any time. It was also determined that the bishops should not allow any preacher to re-

main in the same circuit or station longer than two years, successively.

The following rule was enacted respecting the president of an annual conference in the absence of a bishop: "In case there are two or more presiding elders belonging to one conference, the bishop or bishops may, by letter or otherwise, appoint the president; but if no appointment be made, the conference shall elect the president from among the presiding elders, by ballot, without debate."

It was ordered that the board of official members at quarterly meetings should be called "the quarterly meeting conference." The rule governing such bodies reads thus: "The quarterly meeting conference shall appoint a secretary to take down the proceedings of the quarterly meeting conference in a book kept by one of the stewards of the circuit for that purpose." This rule is still in force.

It was ordered that the Book Concern be removed from Philadelphia to New York; and Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson were elected general book-stewards, or agents.

On motion of Dr. Coke, it was ordered that the Discipline be divided into two parts, the first to contain all that relates to the spiritual and religious concerns of the Church, the other to its temporal interests.

The constitution and course of nature can not be regulated by statute, especially in matters of love and marriage, and the Conference saw fit to modify the rule respecting the marriage of Church members with persons who were not awakened, or were not connected with some branch of the evangelical Church, especially the Methodist. When a member intermarried with an "unbeliever," he was formerly expelled from the society, but now he was simply to be put back on probation, and a suitable exhortation was to be subjoined. Nothing was said as to what further penalty was to be expected at the end of the six months' probation, if the unbeliever still remained out of the Church. The Conference probably thought that an unbelieving consort would by that time be sanctified by the believing (1 Cor. vii, 14); but the following note was added: "We do not prohibit our people from marrying persons who are not of our society, provided

such persons have the form and are seeking the power of godliness; but we are determined to discourage their marrying persons who do not come up to this description; and even in a doubtful case the person shall be put back on trial." While the rule discouraging such marriages is still retained in the Discipline, it is practically a dead letter; for the matter is left to the conscience and judgment of the parties themselves, without ecclesiastical interference.

On motion of Ezekiel Cooper, it was determined that a book-steward should not be appointed for a longer period than eight years. A number of verbal changes were made in the Discipline, which was read in open Conference, and revised section by section. In the twenty-third Article of Religion the words "Constitution of the United States" were substituted for "General Act of Confederation," and the phrase, "are a sovereign and independent nation, and," was inserted after the word "states."

The Church was always opposed to slavery in the abstract, and that domestic institution was, early in its history, the cause and occasion of much debate. Slavery was aggressive because it was profitable. Though it existed in some of the Northern states, it was strongest in the South. It was more entrenched in the social order and customs of the people in that section of the country, and was everywhere a difficult thing to cope with. The Church temporized, making only a feeble protest. At this time its utterances on the evil were measured. The Conference, on the motion of Freeborn Garrettson, resolved that the subject be left to the three bishops, to frame a section to suit the Southern and Northern states, as they in their wisdom might deem best, to be submitted to the Conference for final action. But Bishop Asbury refused to act under this resolution, and Bishop Coke was not a citizen of the United States, so the question was left open. Finally, after a great variety of motions, Ezekiel Cooper moved that a committee of one member from each conference be appointed, to consider the different motions, and report on the subject. The motion prevailed, and George Dougherty, Philip Bruce, William Burke, Henry Willis, Ezekiel Cooper, Freeborn Garrettson, and Thomas Lyell were appointed. The

report of the committee, with a few amendments, was adopted, and was incorporated in the Discipline, forming section nine in the edition for that year, "Of Slavery." While emancipation was still recommended to the owners of slaves, a failure to emancipate did not work forfeiture of membership in the Church; and the members of our societies in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia were to be exempted from the rules laid down in the section.

In accordance with the motion of Dr. Coke, which was passed by the Conference, George Roberts, George Dougherty, and Daniel Hitt were appointed a committee to determine what sections of the Discipline shall belong to the temporal portion. According to their arrangement, this part was to contain the sections defining the boundaries of the conferences, the building of churches, and the qualifications and duties of stewards, together with the sections concerning the salaries to be allowed to the preachers, the Chartered Fund, the printing and circulation of books, and slavery. It was ordered that the first or spiritual part of the Discipline be printed as a separate tract, for the benefit of the Christian slaves belonging to our Society in the South, though, as a general rule, the slaves were unable to read, and were not allowed to be taught.

Ezekiel Cooper, Alexander McCaine, and Thomas Lyell were appointed a committee to draft a letter to the English and Irish Conferences, in answer to theirs to this General Conference.

On the recommendation of the committee appointed on the Book Concern, the Conference ordered the publication of a number of books, among which were Fletcher's Portrait of St. Paul; Memoirs of Rev. Peard Dickinson; Wesley's Sermons not heretofore printed in this country; Wesley's Notes; Benson's Life of Fletcher; Wesley's Journal, Vol. II. A "Methodist Repository" was also ordered to be published, and Dr. Coke was requested to prepare one volume—provided that the general book-steward and the New York Book Committee shall have liberty to leave out such pieces as they see necessary, to insert a few chapters of American biography, experience, and revivals of religion. Dr. Coke was also requested

to prepare the Ecclesiastical History (by Mr. Wesley, perhaps) for the committee, and to adapt Mr. Wesley's Appeal to the Methodists to the circumstances and situation of the United States. Dr. Coke was too busy to prepare any of these volumes, and none of them were printed. The "Repository" was intended, probably, to be a library series, like that of Mr. Wesley's "Christian Library," which was printed in fifty volumes, 16mo, each containing about 320 pages.

The general book-steward and his assistant were authorized to preserve, alter, or change the phraseology and measure of our pocket hymn-book as they in their wisdom might judge best; and Dr. Coke was requested to examine the present hymn-book, and to give his thoughts concerning it. The principal work on the hymn-book, selecting and revising, was done, however, by Bishop Asbury.

Baltimore was selected as the place for holding the next General Conference, and on the 23d day of the month the Conference adjourned to meet May 1, 1808.

1808.

THE General Conference of 1808 met in Baltimore, May 6th. The number of annual conferences was seven, and one hundred and twenty-nine preachers were present. Of these the Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia conferences had eighty-two. William Penn Chandler was elected secretary, and Francis Ward assistant secretary. Bishop Whatcoat was dead, and Dr. Coke was absent, so that Bishop Asbury was alone left to preside.

A Committee of Correspondence, consisting of Ezekiel Cooper, Joshua Wells, and Daniel Hitt, was appointed (John Pitts subsequently taking the place of Joshua Wells), and a Committee of Review and Inspection was also formed, consisting of one member from each annual conference, to wit: Samuel Coate, of New York; Martin Ruter, of New England; William McKendree, of Western; James H. Millard, of South Carolina; Jesse Lee, of Virginia; Nelson Reed, of Baltimore, and Thomas Ware, of Philadelphia.

Ezekiel Cooper presented to the Conference certain letters received from England, being the printed address of the British Conference, two letters from Dr. Coke to the General Conference, and one from him to Bishop Asbury. During the reading of these letters, Bishop Asbury withdrew from the Conference from motives of delicacy, as there were some encomiums bestowed upon him in the British address. In the mean time, Freeborn Garrettson occupied the chair. The address from the Wesleyan Conference and the letters from Dr. Coke were referred to the Committee on Correspondence; and the case of Dr. Coke was referred to a special committee of three, to report thereon. This committee made its report the next day—May 7th—and, with amendments, it was adopted as follows:

"1. *Resolved*, That the General Conference do agree and consent that Dr. Coke may continue in Europe till he be called to the United States by the General Conference, or by all the annual conferences respectively.

"2. *Resolved,* That we retain a grateful remembrance of the services and labors of Dr. Coke among us, and the thanks of this Conference are hereby acknowledged to him, and to God, for all his labors of love toward us, from the time he first left his native country to serve us.

"3. *Resolved,* That Dr. Coke's name shall be retained on our Minutes after the name of the bishops, in a N. B.—'Dr. Coke, at the request of the British Conference, and by consent of our General Conference, resides in Europe; he is not to exercise the office of superintendent or bishop among us in the United States, until he be recalled by the General Conference, or by all the annual conferences respectively.'

"4. *Resolved,* That the Committee of Correspondence be, and are hereby, directed to draft two letters, one to the British Conference, the other to Dr. Coke, in answer to their respective letters to us, and therein communicating to them, respectively, the contents of the above resolutions."

A memorial from the New York Conference, on the necessity of making the General Conference a delegated body, was read. In this memorial the New England, the Western, and the South Carolina Conferences joined. A committee of fourteen members, two from each conference, was appointed, to draw up such regulations as they might think best for the government of the General Conference as a delegated body, and report the same for consideration by the Conference. The committee was selected by the several conferences as follows: Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson, New York; George Pickering and Joshua Soule, New England; William McKendree and William Burke, Western; William Phoebus and Josiah Randle, South Carolina; Philip Bruce and Jesse Lee, Virginia; Stephen G. Roszel and Nelson Reed, Baltimore; and John McClaskey and Thomas Ware, Philadelphia.

The continued absence of Dr. Coke in England and the recent death of Bishop Whatcoat (he died July 5, 1806) made it necessary to strengthen the episcopacy; and it was variously proposed to elect one, or seven, or two additional bishops, but the Conference thought it best to elect but one. The election took place on May 12th, and the votes given were as follows: For William McKendree, 95; Ezekiel Cooper, 24; Jesse Lee, 4; Thomas Ware, 3, and Daniel Hitt, 2; total, 128. The ordination of the bishop-elect took place on Wednesday, May

18th, Elders Garrettson, Bruce, Lee, and Ware assisting Bishop Asbury in the services.

The Committee on Regulating and Perpetuating the General Conference met and appointed three of their number as a sub-committee, to formulate a plan. This sub-committee was composed of Ezekiel Cooper, Philip Bruce, and Joshua Soule. Each member agreed to prepare a plan, but only Cooper and Soule put anything down on paper. Both of these agreed that the General Conference should not do away with episcopacy; but Soule and Bruce insisted that it should be a general itinerant superintendency, and not one of a limited or diocesan character. And so the entire plan, as prepared by Soule, was submitted to the committee of fourteen, adopted by them, and reported to the Conference.

Cooper, who favored the election of seven bishops—one for each conference—was also in favor of electing the presiding elders. When the report of the committee of fourteen was brought into the Conference, the consideration of the plan submitted by them was postponed, to take up a resolution introduced by Mr. Cooper, to the effect that each annual conference should, without debate, annually choose, by ballot, its own presiding elders. This resolution was debated for two or three days; but upon putting it to vote it was lost, only fifty-two voting for it and seventy-three against it. The report of the committee of fourteen, providing for a delegated General Conference, was then voted on (May 18th) and lost, fifty-seven voting for and sixty-four against.

The preachers from the Philadelphia and Baltimore Conferences generally voted in the negative, and much feeling was excited among the members from the more distant conferences. Those from New England asked leave to withdraw, stating that they did not desire to create any disturbance; but their presence any longer was needless, as they constituted only a small minority. The Western members also felt outraged. "Burke's brow," says Henry Smith, in his *Recollections*, "gathered a solemn frown; Sale and others looked sad; and as for poor Lakin, he wept like a child." But on May 23d the subject of a delegated General Conference was again considered; and, on motion of Enoch George, it was voted by a very large

majority that "The General Conference shall be composed of one member for every five members of each annual conference." Thus was established the principle of a delegated General Conference, conceding to the conferences at a distance from the center all that they asked for in the way of an equitable representation. This representation was made as large as possible. This was the first item in the plan which had been proposed by the committee. The other items were taken up separately, and, with a few verbal amendments and differences, were adopted by the Conference, and together they form what has been known ever since as "the Constitution." The Journal of the General Conference does not contain it as finally passed, except piece-meal, as the secretary at the moment reduced it to writing. It appears in complete and corrected form in the Discipline for 1808, evidently edited from the original manuscript report, perhaps by Bishop Asbury and John Wilson, the book agent. It has been republished with but little change in every edition of the Discipline since.

The annual conferences were allowed to choose their own plans for the raising of supplies for the preachers. It was provided that if the amounts allowed the preachers should not be raised, the society should not be accountable for the deficiency, as in the case of ordinary debts.

The Committee of Review reported on several matters referred to them: 1. That the manuscript hymn-book compiled by Daniel Hitt is, upon the whole, a good one, and that it would be of considerable advantage to our people if published in a separate volume, so that those who have the present hymn-book might be supplied with this, and that in future both should be combined into one volume. 2. It would be better to publish selections from the book of letters giving accounts of the progress of the Church and revivals rather than the entire book. This was intended, perhaps, to constitute one of the volumes of the proposed Methodist Repository. 3. It would not be advisable to adopt the music book proposed by Brother James Evans, of New York; but should he think proper to publish it on his own account, the preachers would recommend it in their various societies as a work of merit. 4. The committee has taken a cursory view of a manuscript

"History of the Methodists in the United States of America" (probably the one written by Jesse Lee); but they deem it rather a simple and crude narrative of the proceedings of the Methodists than a history, and think it would be improper to publish it. (If this was Mr. Lee's History, the author printed it at his own risk, having first secured several hundred subscribers in various states for it. The work is now valuable and interesting.) 5. Our traveling preachers are enjoined from publishing any pamphlet, hymn, or spiritual songs, either of their own or others' composing, in their individual or joint capacity; but all our publications should come through the channel of our general Book Concern.

On putting the report to vote on May 25th, it was all adopted, except the fifth item, which was amended so as to read: "No traveling preacher shall be permitted to publish any book or pamphlet without the approbation of the annual conference to which he belongs, or of a committee chosen by them."

Letters drafted to Dr. Coke and the British Conference were read and approved, and the secretary of the Conference was directed to sign them, and the members of the Committee on Correspondence to countersign them on behalf of the General Conference.

It was ordered that "Fletcher's Checks" be reprinted immediately, commencing with the first volume. (These Checks had been issued in America in six volumes, 16mo in size, the first volume of which had been printed for John Dickins, book steward, in 1791, the other volumes following soon afterward. Four volumes were finished by 1793. These six volumes were, according to this order, reprinted, all at once.)

After making a few minor alterations in the Discipline, and providing for a special edition of the same for South Carolina, by leaving out the section and the general rule on slavery, the General Conference adjourned on Thursday afternoon, May 26th. Thus early did the General Conference begin its compromises on the subject of slavery. Whether the special edition of the Discipline for South Carolina was ever printed is doubtful. No copies of it, if printed, are known to be in existence.

1812.

THE first delegated General Conference met this year in the city of New York, May 1st. Eight conferences were represented, and the whole number of delegates was ninety. The session was opened with religious exercises conducted by Bishop Asbury. William M. Kennedy, of the South Carolina Conference, was elected secretary *pro tempore*. The question of admitting reserve delegates in place of their principals, who might be absent, was settled by allowing Joel Winch and Daniel Webb to occupy the seats of John Brodhead and Elijah R. Sabin, who could not attend. The precedent thus established has been followed ever since. When the roll of the Conference was made up, it was resolved that a secretary be appointed who was not a member of the Conference, and accordingly Daniel Hitt was elected.

A letter from Dr. Coke was read by Bishop Asbury. Rules of Order for the government of the Conference were reported by a committee that had been appointed for this purpose, and adopted. It appears from the records that heretofore none but members and officers of the Conference were allowed to be present at its sessions and to witness its proceedings. On motion, preachers in full connection were now allowed to sit in the church where the Conference met, as spectators; but they must occupy seats in the gallery. In order to repress frequent addresses before the Conference by the same member, a person was appointed to keep tally of those that spoke, and mark the time which they consumed. Whether this plan served as an efficacious check is not stated.

A written address to the Conference by Bishop McKendree was read; and the separate matters treated of were referred to appropriate committees, to consider and report on. As this written address was a novel thing in Methodism, Bishop Asbury rose to his feet as soon as it was read, and, addressing McKendree, said, "I have something to say to you before the Conference." McKendree arose, and the two bishops stood face to face. Asbury went on to say: "This is a new thing.

I never did business in this way; and why is this new thing introduced?" Bishop McKendree replied: "You are our father; we are your sons. You never had need of it. I am only a brother, and have need of it." Asbury said no more, but addressed the Conference, giving a brief historical account of the work in past years, its present state, and what may probably be expected in the future upon this continent.

Early in the session, James Axley, of Tennessee, introduced a resolution, "That no stationed or local preacher shall retail spirituous or malt liquors without forfeiting his ministerial character among us." It seems strange that there was any occasion for such a resolution. The Church had always retained among its General Rules the substance, if not the words, of Mr. Wesley's original admonition concerning the things to be avoided: "Drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity." But for some reason the second clause had dropped out. It now became common for members of the Church to buy and sell, if they did not drink, intoxicating liquors. There were also distillers among them. This laxity of discipline, or rather of morals, had invaded the ranks of the ministry. It is sad to record that this motion, after being postponed for action several times, was finally lost. The Conference had had ample time to deliberate upon it; the members well understood its nature and import; they were all total abstainers, so far as the use of strong drink as a beverage is concerned; and yet they temporized. But Mr. Axley was not discouraged by his defeat, as we shall see hereafter.

Jesse Lee moved that the members of the next General Conference be appointed by the annual conferences according to their seniority, and that there shall be one delegate for every six members thereof. This motion, after being postponed several times, was finally lost.

A communication was read from Benjamin Tanner, of Philadelphia, asking the concurrence and influence of the Conference in a request that Bishop Asbury should sit for his likeness, to have a portrait engraving made from it. It was thereupon resolved by the Conference, "That Bishop Asbury be, and is hereby, requested to sit to a good painter, employed by

Benjamin Tanner, for his picture to be taken, for the purpose of engraving and publishing a portrait." The Book Agents were authorized to negotiate with Mr. Tanner for such quantities of the portraits as might be expedient to supply the Connexion.

Committees were appointed on the Book Concern, the Episcopacy, Division of the Work in the West, Local Preachers, Doctrine, Discipline and Practice, Review and Revisal, Unfinished Business of the Last General Conference, Genesee Conference (to determine the eligibility of the delegates from that conference), and on Temporal Affairs.

The work in the West was divided into two conferences, to take the place of the Western Conference, namely, the Ohio and the Tennessee conferences; and the boundaries of each were established. The bishops were authorized to establish another conference down the Mississippi, in the interval of the General Conference, if they deemed it necessary.

The ordination of local deacons to the office of elder was authorized by a vote of 49 to 35, under certain regulations and restrictions.

The question of electing presiding elders by the annual conferences was introduced, and, after a free discussion, was lost by a vote of 42 for to 45 against it.

Bishop Asbury, in his address to the Conference, spoke of his desire to go to Europe on a visit; and this matter was referred to a committee of three, to report on. They reported that it was their sincere request and desire that Bishop Asbury would relinquish his thoughts of visiting Europe, and confine his labors to the American Connexion.

The secretary was directed to procure a convenient trunk in which to deposit the Journal and other papers belonging to the General Conference, and the Book Agents were ordered to take charge of the same. This action was probably taken because at the opening of the session the Journal of 1808 could not be found until a thorough search for it was finally made among the papers of the late John Wilson, Book Agent. It was found laid away with some old books.

The Committee on the Book Concern made a careful examination of the publishing interests of the Church, and rec-

ommended that the *Methodist Magazine*, two volumes of which had been heretofore published, be revived, and that the third volume be commenced, at furthest, by the next January. They also advised as to the discount to be allowed to the preachers on the sale of books, and that two book agents be elected, the first to be editor and general book-steward and the other assistant book-steward.

Daniel Hitt was elected editor and book-steward, and Thomas Ware, assistant. Ezekiel Cooper, Nathan Bangs, and Laban Clark were appointed a committee to attend, with the book agents, in selecting those parts of the Journal which needed to be incorporated in the Discipline; and they were granted the authority to modify the language and correct the grammatical construction of the next edition of the Discipline, but in no case to alter the sense therein contained.

A motion offered by John Sale, to prevent preachers and private members from buying lottery tickets, or having anything to do with lotteries, was postponed until May 1, 1816.

On motion of Jesse Lee, the Book Agents were instructed to leave out of the future editions of the Discipline all the Doctrinal Tracts, and to publish them in a separate volume.

Baltimore was selected as the place for holding the next General Conference; and on Friday, May 22d, the Conference adjourned, to meet May 1, 1816.

1816.

THE General Conference of 1816 was composed of one hundred and seven members, representing nine annual conferences. It convened in the city of Baltimore on Wednesday, May 1st. Bishop McKendree presided. Lewis R. Fechtig was elected secretary.

Since the last session of the General Conference, both Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury had passed away; the former dying at sea in the Indian Ocean, May 2, 1814, and the latter at the home of George Arnold, near Fredericksburg, Va., March 31, 1816, only a month before the General Conference met. The Methodists of Baltimore desired to have his remains brought to that city and interred there; and the Conference passed a resolution directing their removal. When the remains of Bishop Asbury were received, appropriate services were held in the Light Street Church, the seat of the General Conference; and thence, followed by the members of the Conference and a vast concourse of citizens, the body was carried to the Eutaw Street Church and deposited in a vault under the recess of the pulpit. Bishop McKendree preached the funeral sermon.

An address to the Conference, prepared by Bishop Asbury, was presented, with appropriate remarks by Bishop McKendree, and read; and also an address written by Bishop McKendree was read by Thomas L. Douglass, of Tennessee. Both addresses were referred to a committee, in order to report to the Conference the different subjects mentioned in them appropriate to be committed to distinct committees. One member from each annual conference was selected, as follows: Nathan Bangs, George Pickering, William Case, Thomas L. Douglass, Lewis Myers, Philip Bruce, Nelson Reed, and Robert R. Roberts. Rules of Order were adopted, and a sufficient number of copies was printed to furnish each member with *one*. The Conference was too economical to print a surplus copy.

In accordance with the recommendation of the committee to which the Bishops' addresses were referred, the following standing committees were appointed: On Episcopacy, Book Con-

cern, Ways and Means, Safety (to inquire whether the doctrines and discipline of the Church had been maintained, and enforced, and the circuits and stations duly attended to), and on Temporal Economy.

The trustees of the Chartered Fund reported, and their report was referred to a committee of three for examination. A committee of nine was appointed to take into consideration that part of the Discipline which relates to local preachers, and any other subject with regard to them, which the General Conference may refer to them.

It was resolved to elect and ordain two additional bishops; and when the ballots were counted, Enoch George and Robert Richford Roberts were found to be elected. The ordination took place on Friday morning, May 17th.

The method of appointing presiding elders was discussed, and it was the sentiment of many of the preachers that they should be appointed only after nomination by the bishop and election by the several annual conferences. This method did not meet with favor on the part of the majority, and the proposed plan was laid on the table. A similar proposition was lost on a direct vote.

The salary of the preachers was fixed at $100 each; if married, $100 was allowed for their wives; and, in addition, the necessary family or boarding expenses, to be estimated by the board of stewards in each charge, and determined by the quarterly conference.

The Methodist Episcopal Church always favored free sittings in its houses of worship, and the Conference passed a resolution condemnatory of pews to be sold or disposed of as private property. The rule requiring the men and women to sit apart in all our churches was inconsistent with the private ownership of pews, which would be making a class distinction in the membership, and was unnecessary for the proper support and maintenance of the gospel.

Bishop Roberts assumed the chair as presiding officer on May 18th. It does not appear from the Journal that Bishop George presided upon any occasion during this session of the General Conference. It may have been according to his own desire to be relieved of this duty. However, Bishop Roberts

retired from his place as chairman of a committee appointed on the situation of our brethren in Montreal. The late war with England had disturbed the relation of the Church toward the Canadian work, which was still supplied by preachers appointed by the New York conference. The committee to confer with delegates from the British Connexion relative to the matter consisted of Robert R. Roberts, Samuel Draper, and George Harmon. John Emory was appointed to take the place of Bishop Roberts on this committee, and also on the Committee of Ways and Means.

A report on the support of the ministry, from the Committee of Ways and Means, was presented, and, with a few amendments, adopted. The substance of the report was embodied in the Discipline of 1816, and it is the most important and precise method of supporting the gospel and of raising supplies that had so far been enacted.

The Committee on Canadian Affairs reported that it was inconsistent with the duties of the Methodist Episcopal Church to give up any part of our work to the superintendence of the British Wesleyan missionaries, and recommended that a respectful letter be addressed to the Missionary Society in London, explaining the reasons for this action. Nathan Bangs, John Emory, and Thomas L. Douglass were appointed a committee to prepare and forward such a letter.

The trustees of the Chartered Fund were authorized to sell and dispose of any of the stocks or property belonging thereto, and reinvest the proceeds in other securities, whenever in their judgment the capital and interest of the fund would be better secured or advanced.

The boundaries of the conferences were defined, and eleven of them provided for. The Committee of Safety presented an earnest protest against the preaching of any other doctrines than those taught in our Church standards, excluding all speculative theology; against allowing worldliness and fashion to creep into our societies; against laxity in discipline, and the tendency to confine preaching and other services to the Sabbath, by reducing the size of the circuits, and fostering local interests to the neglect of the connectional.

James Axley offered in substance the same resolution on

the subject of temperance as he had introduced in the General Conference of 1812, to wit: "No preacher shall distill or retail spirituous liquors without forfeiting his license." Lewis Myers moved to amend the motion thus: "That every prudent means be used by our annual and quarterly meeting conferences to discourage the distilling or retailing of spirituous liquors among our people, and especially among our preachers;" but the motion was subsequently withdrawn. The previous question was then called for, "Shall the main question now be put?" and carried. Thomas Burge moved that the resolution be divided, so as to vote on the distilling and the retailing of liquors separately. This being ordered, the vote was taken on the first member of the resolution, and carried. The vote was then taken on the second member and likewise carried; so that the whole resolution was carried as offered. This victory of Mr. Axley was not quite as sweeping as it would have been had the resolution offered by him four years previously been adopted; but it showed the growing sentiment of the Church on the subject of dealing in intoxicating liquors. So far as the laity were concerned, it did not affect them, and this action was not embodied in the General Rule on the subject of temperance until many years subsequently. We shall trace the progress of the temperance reformation in the action of the General Conference hereafter.

Joshua Soule was elected editor and general book steward, and Thomas Mason assistant. The expenses of the delegates to the General Conference appearing to be $1,419.75, of which only $731.39 had been collected, the Conference ordered that a draft of $638.36 be made on the Book Concern to cover the deficiency; and that inasmuch as Bishops George and Roberts had made no claim, $50 each was appropriated for their expenses.

On the subject of slavery, the committee of nine, who had been specially appointed for the purpose on May 13th, reported a resolution which was passed, making the Chapter on Slavery in the Discipline to read: "We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery; therefore no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter, where the laws of the state in which he lives will

admit of emancipation and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom."

The ratio of representation in the General Conference was changed from five to seven. The bishops, or a committee appointed by them at each annual conference, were instructed to prescribe a course of study and of reading proper to be pursued by candidates for the ministry; and it was ordered that before such candidates are admitted into full connection, they shall pass satisfactory examinations upon the subjects proposed.

The publishing interests of the Church were carefully considered. The Book Concern in New York was directed to publish a monthly *Methodist Magazine* of forty pages octavo, as a continuation of the former Methodist magazine, only two volumes of which were issued. The editing of the magazine was committed to the Book Steward and his assistant. It was expected that the publication would commence in 1817; but it was not until January, 1818, that the first number was issued. The order of the General Conference of 1812 to begin a third volume of the Magazine by January, 1813, was found to be impracticable, and the work was not undertaken. Thanks were returned by the Conference to Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware, the retiring book agents, for their services to the Church in that department.

William Phœbus, Nathan Bangs, and Daniel Hitt were appointed a committee, with the book agents, to revise the Discipline according to the Journals of the present General Conference, under the inspection of the bishops. In this revision the editors were instructed to omit the word "connexion," and substitute the words "Church," "community," and "itinerancy" in every place, as the grammatical construction may require.

The book agents were directed to establish a depository at Pittsburgh, for receiving and forwarding to the preachers in the West the publications of the Book Concern. They were also instructed to publish more small books and fewer large ones, and to print an edition of Mr. Wesley's "Answer to Dr. Taylor on Original Sin."

Baltimore was chosen as the place for holding the next General Conference, to meet May 1, 1820.

1820.

THE General Conference of this year met in the Eutaw Street Church, Baltimore, on Monday, May 1st. After the session was formally opened with religious exercises by Bishop McKendree, he informed the Conference that he would be unable to attend regularly to the duties of his office, on account of feeble health, but would render all the service he could consistent with his bodily strength. Bishop George took the chair, and the members present handed in their certificates of election. There were ninety-three delegates in attendance. Alexander McCaine was elected secretary, but not being present at the organization Lewis R. Fechtig was appointed secretary *pro tem.*

The first business was the adoption of rules of order, those of 1816 being, with a few amendments, re-enacted. These rules, together with the names of the delegates, their places of abode, and the conferences from which they came, were ordered to be printed. Arrangements were made for preaching daily in one or more of the city churches.

A written address from Bishop McKendree was presented by Bishop Roberts, and read, and the matters treated on by the bishop were referred to appropriate committees. Bishops George and Roberts made verbal addresses concerning the various departments of Church work. The committees were elected as follows: On Episcopacy, Local Preachers, Instruction of Children, Slavery, Missions, Temperance, The Condition of the Church in Canada, Houses of Worship, Conference Boundaries, Preparation of a Life of Bishop Asbury, Book Concern, American Colonization Society, Candidates for Admission into the Traveling Connection and Local Ministry.

A resolution, introduced by James B. Finley and John Lane, instructing the Committee on the Book Concern to consider the propriety of establishing a branch of the book business in the West, was passed. Various memorials and petitions were presented and referred. The secretary was authorized to purchase a new trunk or chest for the preservation of the Con-

ference Journals, documents, etc. The trustees of the Chartered Fund reported, and two vacancies in the Board were filled by the election of Alexander Cook and James Donley.

The Committee on the Book Concern was instructed to inquire into the expediency of having a tune-book compiled and published for the use of Methodist choirs and congregations. The committee was also instructed to inquire whether there are not papers to be collected, the works of Bishop Whatcoat, and that they take these papers into consideration and report on the same.

A committee of seven, consisting of Nathan Bangs, Henry Stead, Jonathan Stamper, Daniel Fillmore, Stephen Martindale, James Bateman, and John T. Weaver, was appointed to inquire into the expediency of digesting and outlining a plan for the institution of schools or seminaries within the bounds and under the direction of the several annual conferences.

A Committee on Rights and Privileges, composed of five members, was appointed; and to it was referred the subject of locating ministers by an annual conference, without the consent of such minister. The Committee on Revisals was directed to take into consideration what shall be done with those preachers who marry women that have not the form and are not seeking the power of godliness.

The secretary of the Baltimore Conference was requested to lay before the Committee on the Life of Bishop Asbury the proceedings of that conference relative to the subject.

The appeals of William Houston, Morris Howe, and Alexander McCaine were entertained, and the actions of their respective conferences were reversed. The case of William Burke, expelled from the Ohio Conference, was taken up, and the action of the Conference was confirmed. It may be proper to state that Mr. Burke was expelled on no charge of immorality, but because of a variance with his presiding elder, and insubordination.

The Committee on Episcopacy reported, that in view of the continued bodily affliction and debility of Bishop McKendree, he be relieved of many of his episcopal duties, and allowed to travel in such directions and remain in such places as he may judge most conducive to his own health and comfort;

and that it was expedient to elect and ordain one general superintendent at this session of the General Conference. The report being adopted, on Saturday, May 13th, the Conference proceeded to the election of a bishop. On counting the ballots, Joshua Soule had 47 votes and Nathan Bangs 38. Mr. Soule having the majority was therefore elected.

In the report of the Committee on Education it was recommended, and the Conference resolved, That all the annual conferences establish institutions of learning under their control; that the bishops use their influence to carry this resolution into effect; and that they may appoint preachers to be presidents, principals, or teachers in said institutions.

The Conference ordered that in future no house of worship shall be erected, or the building of the same be undertaken, until the site of ground on which such house or houses are to be placed is secured to the Church by a deed of settlement in fee simple, legally executed and recorded. Three-fourths of the money necessary to complete the building must be in hand, or subscribed, before the building is commenced. The presiding elders and preachers in charge were directed to make proper inquiries concerning the titles of our present places of worship; and in all cases where the title is imperfect, to use the most judicious and prudent measures to perfect such titles; and when vacancies exist in the boards of trustees, to have the vacancies filled as directed in the Discipline. And further, the sittings in all our churches shall be free, and no pews shall be rented or sold.

The question of electing presiding elders in each conference was introduced, and the matter discussed during several days of the session. On Friday, May 19th, Ezekiel Cooper reported the action of the Committee on Episcopacy with regard to this subject. They say:

"The committee appointed to confer with the bishops on a plan to conciliate the wishes of the brethren on the subject of choosing presiding elders, recommend to the Conference the adoption of the following resolutions, to be inserted in their proper place in the Discipline:—

"*Resolved*, 1. That whenever, in any annual conference, there shall be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder, in consequence of his period of service of four years having expired, or

the bishop wishing to remove any presiding elder, or by death, resignation or otherwise, the bishop or president of the conference having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number, out of which the conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted: Provided, also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder in the interval of any annual conference, the bishop shall have authority to fill the said vacancy or vacancies until the ensuing annual conference.

"*Resolved*, 2. That the presiding elders be, and they hereby are, made the advisory council of the bishop or president of the conference in stationing the preachers."

This report was signed by Ezekiel Cooper, Stephen G. Roszel, Nathan Bangs, Joshua Wells, John Emory, and William Capers, the committee. On being read, it was put to vote, each resolution separately, and carried—sixty-one to twenty-five. These resolutions were then recommitted to the same committee, in order to be incorporated in that section of the Discipline relating to the presiding elders.

The minority were much aggrieved at this action of the General Conference, considering it an infringement on the rights of the bishops, and in violation of the Constitution. Joshua Soule, bishop-elect, was the leader of the opposition. His convictions were so strong that he refused to be ordained, alleging that he could not conscientiously submit to have the episcopal prerogative and power curtailed, and he felt that he could not therefore carry the new rule into execution. Besides, his election took place before the rule was adopted.

The Conference ordered that the Book Agents have leave to publish any book, not before published by them, which should be approved and recommended by the Book Committee in New York. It also determined that an additional book agent be appointed, whose duty it should be to reside in Cincinnati, and manage the book business in the western states, under the direction of the editor in New York—the person so appointed to be a member of the Ohio Conference. This Conference was authorized to appoint a book committee of three, to examine the accounts of the western agent, and report annually.

Nathan Bangs was elected editor and general book steward for New York, with Thomas Mason as assistant. Martin Ruter was elected for Cincinnati.

The bishops were requested to send a delegate to the British Conference at their next session, and to furnish him with the necessary instructions—the expenses of the delegate to be paid out of the funds of the Book Concern.

Joshua Soule having signified in a letter to the bishops, which was read before the Conference, that if he were ordained a bishop he would not hold himself bound by a certain resolution of the Conference relative to the nomination and election of presiding elders, the resolution following was offered:

"*Resolved*, That the bishops be earnestly requested by this Conference to defer or postpone the ordination of the said Joshua Soule until he gives satisfactory explanations to this Conference."

This resolution evidently regarded Mr. Soule as guilty of contumacy. After a brief debate, Mr. Soule made some remarks, explanatory of his position, and by consent the resolution was withdrawn. It was then moved that the action of the Conference concerning the presiding eldership be reconsidered; but without coming to any decision on the subject, the Conference adjourned for the day. On the next day it was moved to postpone the reconsideration, to give time for thought and deliberation, so as to promote peace and harmony. The postponement was not agreed to, and the vote to reconsider the resolutions heretofore passed, being taken by ballot, there was a tie; 43 for to 43 against. A repetition of the ballot showed the same result.

Bishop George announced that the bishops had deferred the ordination of Joshua Soule; but on Thursday, May 25th, he informed the Conference that the ordination of the bishop elect would take place that day at twelve o'clock. Mr. Soule immediately arose, and presented a communication, resigning the office of a general superintendent, to which he had been elected. The letter of resignation was laid on the table, and at twelve o'clock the Conference adjourned. In the afternoon Mr. Soule expressed a wish that the Conference would come to a decision at once on his letter of resignation, which he had offered in the morning. On motion, it was agreed that the decision be deferred until the next day.

The Committee on the "Life of Bishop Asbury" reported,

recommending that a committee of three be appointed to assist Dr. S. K. Jennings, in furnishing such further facts and information as may be obtained concerning the bishop, and in revising the manuscript, and that the sum of $225 be allowed for the expense of preparing it so far as it is completed. When finished, the book agents and book committee should determine what further sum shall be allowed to Dr. Jennings.

The Constitution of the Missionary Society was amended, and a copy given to the Corresponding Secretary to be presented to the managers. The ratio of representation in the General Conference was fixed at one delegate for every seven members of the General Conference, and Baltimore was chosen as the place for holding the next session.

The letter of resignation presented by Joshua Soule was called for and read, and a motion was passed requesting him to withdraw his resignation and comply with the wishes of his brethren in submitting to be ordained. Mr. Soule, who was absent from the Conference room when the vote was taken, came in immediately afterward, and again stated his purpose to resign. His resignation was accepted.

It had been moved in the morning session, "that the rule passed at this Conference respecting the nomination and election of presiding elders be suspended until the next General Conference; and that the superintendents be and they are hereby directed to act under the old rule respecting the appointment of presiding elders."

A motion to postpone this resolution was negatived by a vote of thirty-nine to forty-four, and it was then laid on the table. After Mr. Soule's resignation was accepted, the question was taken up, and on being put to vote was carried by dividing the house, forty-five on one side to thirty-five on the other.

The bishops who should attend the New York Conference, and three members of the Conference, Joshua Soule, Nathan Bangs, and Daniel Ostrander, were appointed a committee to revise the Discipline.

The expenses of the delegates were ordered to be paid out of the funds belonging to the Book Concern, the entire amount being $1,673:19. Resolutions of thanks were passed, and on the 27th day of May the Conference adjourned.

1824.

THE ninth General Conference met in Baltimore on Saturday, May 1, 1824, and was opened with religious exercises by Bishop McKendree. John Emory was elected secretary. One hundred and twenty-five delegates, from the twelve annual conferences, were present. Richard Reece and John Hannah, representatives from the British Conference, were introduced, and Mr. Reece presented an address from his Conference, with the proper credentials, and made a very affectionate and interesting address.

An address from the senior bishop was presented and read, and laid on the table until rules of order should be adopted. The following committees were appointed: On Episcopacy, Boundaries, Itinerancy, Local Ministers, Book Concern, Missions, Churches and Parsonages, People of Color, Revisals and Unfinished Business, Canadian Affairs, and on Addresses, Petitions, Memorials, etc.

The various topics spoken of in the bishops' address were referred to the appropriate committees. A committee was appointed to address the British Conference in answer to their communication addressed to the American General Conference, through Doctors Reece and Hannah. Dr. Reece was requested to favor the Conference with such suggestions and views as he might be pleased to make.

A communication from the trustees of the Chartered Fund was referred to the Committee on Itinerancy. A vacancy in the Board was filled by the election of Thomas Jackson.

Through some carelessness on the part of the former secretary or custodian, a few of the papers belonging to the General Conference placed in the Conference trunk were injured by a bottle of ink being broken among them; but a special committee of scrutiny reported that all were legible except an exhibit of the Book Concern in New York, which was totally defaced.

Early in the session the question of increasing the number of the bishops was referred to the Committee on Episcopacy. The health of Bishop McKendree was still infirm, and he

arranged with his colleagues for them to occupy the chair during the session of the General Conference most of the time.

With reference to the publication of books, the Committee on the Book Concern were directed to inquire whether books containing doctrines contrary to those believed and inculcated by the Church do not issue from our presses; whether it is expedient to purchase for distribution among our societies books from other publishers; and whether a cheaper binding of our books may not be used. Up to this date all the volumes published by the Book Concern had been bound with leather covers, calf or sheep—both more expensive than cloth.

The cause of education has always interested the Church. Some of our earlier attempts at establishing colleges proved a failure. Private institutions for the training of Methodist youths were undertaken, and some of the conferences had under their control academies or seminaries; but there was no school of high grade now in existence. Hence the Committee on Education were directed to inquire into the expediency and practicability of establishing a general seminary of learning, or college, under the supervision of the General Conference.

As there was at this time in some of the societies of the Church much talk about lay representation in its higher councils, the following resolution was introduced and passed:

"*Resolved*, That the Committee of Address on Petitions, etc., be instructed to inquire into the expediency of directing the several annual conferences to take measures to ascertain the sentiments of our preachers, traveling and local, and also of the members of our Church, on the subject of a lay delegation, and report the result to the next General Conference."

This resolution was offered before the extreme and impolitic agitation of the subject by the so-called "Reformers" had been inaugurated or outlined. As will be seen hereafter they were unwilling to wait; and though the ends they proposed may have been just and equitable, they were hasty in action and intemperate in the use of language. Invective never ascends to the dignity of an argument.

Certain changes were ordered to be made in the Discipline, most of which tended to a greater simplicity in the government and methods of the Church, and giving the annual con-

ferences more power to regulate matters of a strictly local character, such as the building of churches, their relation to slavery in the slave states, the appointment of trustees for Church property, etc. Those who held slaves were urged to teach them to read the Bible, and to allow colored preachers to attend the quarterly conferences. Presiding elders were also authorized to hold quarterly conferences for colored preachers exclusively, if they thought best.

The relations of the Conference in Canada to those in the United States were referred to the Committee on the Affairs of Canada to be amicably adjusted, though Canadian Methodism was not made independent.

William Burke, of Cincinnati, appealed to the General Conference against the action of the Ohio Conference which expelled him from the ministry, and he was allowed to speak in his own behalf. The Ohio Conference was represented by John Waterman. When the vote was taken, the action of that Conference was affirmed.

A committee was appointed on disputed accounts between the Book Concern and certain individuals, with authority to adjust the same.

The following resolution, offered by David Young, was carried by a vote of 63 for to 61 against:

"WHEREAS, A majority of the annual conferences have judged the resolutions making presiding elders elective, and which were passed and then suspended at the last General Conference, unconstitutional; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the said resolutions are not of authority, and shall not be carried into effect."

A committee of three was appointed to inquire what is necessary to be done by this General Conference in reference to the "Life of Bishop Asbury." The Committee on Episcopacy having recommended that the episcopacy be strengthened by the election of two bishops, the Conference proceeded to ballot for the same. On the first ballot, 128 votes were cast, of which Joshua Soule received 64 votes, William Beauchamp 62, Elijah Hedding 61, John Emory 59, Martin Ruter 5, Lewis Myers 2, and N. Bangs, P. P. Sandford and D. Ostrander 1 each. The number necessary to elect being 65, and no choice

being made, a second ballot was taken with the following result: Joshua Soule received 65 votes; Elijah Hedding, 64; William Beauchamp, 62; John Emory, 58; L. Myers, 2; Martin Ruter, 2; John Hedding, 1. Joshua Soule having the requisite number of votes was therefore elected. No other choice being made, the Conference proceeded to ballot the third time for the second general superintendent. Previously to the third balloting, John Emory begged the Conference to accept his acknowledgment of the respectful notice taken of his name in the votes just cast, and requested that he might not be considered in nomination in the subsequent balloting. The Conference then proceeded to ballot for the third time. One hundred and twenty-eight votes were given, of which Elijah Hedding had 66; William Beauchamp, 60; J. Emory, 1; and blank, 1. Elijah Hedding was declared to be duly elected.

The representatives sent by the British Conference on behalf of Methodism in Great Britain, Richard Reece and John Hannah, were both requested to preach sermons before the General Conference during the session. This was accordingly done at the times arranged for, to the great satisfaction and edification of the Conference, which further requested copies of the same for publication, as also of Dr. Reece's address, as delegate.

For the New York Book Concern, Nathan Bangs was elected editor and general Book Steward, and John Emory was elected Assistant Book Agent. For the Western Book Concern, Martin Ruter was elected agent.

The Committee on the "Life of Bishop Asbury" reported, and it was ordered, That Dr. Samuel K. Jennings be respectfully requested to deliver the materials in his possession, together with the manuscripts of Bishop Asbury's Life as far as he has written it, into the hands of William Beauchamp, and that Brother Beauchamp make use of them, and all other materials within his reach, in the preparation of a Life of Bishop Asbury. Mr. Beauchamp died only a short time after the Conference adjourned, without having written the proposed Life. What became of the manuscripts of Mr. Jennings does not appear in the Journal.

The committee appointed for the purpose prepared an ad-

dress to the British Conference, which was adopted, and the bishops were authorized and requested to appoint a delegate to visit the British Conference in 1826. The Editor of the Book Concern in New York was given permission to print the Address of the British Conference, and the Reply from the General Conference, and also the Address of the bishop to the General Conference, and the Report on Missions.

It was made the duty of the preachers, as far as practicable, to encourage Sunday-schools, to form the children of their congregations into classes for religious instruction, and to instruct them personally, or to appoint suitable leaders for this purpose, and to leave to their successors a correct account of each class, and the name of the leader. It was recommended that each annual conference not having a seminary of learning use the utmost exertion to establish one; and the preachers were to use their influence to introduce teachers, whose learning, piety, and religious tenets they could recommend, into schools.

The bishops-elect, having consented to receive ordination, were consecrated to office on Friday, May 28th. The committee on the recognition of the validity of ordinations received in the Protestant Episcopal and other Churches reported that they had not come to any decision on the subject, and asked to be discharged from the further consideration of it. The report was adopted, and the matter was left as unfinished business.

Although the "suspended resolutions" had already been declared "not of authority," and that they "shall not be carried into effect," Lewis Myers moved to take up the resolution relative to them, by first suspending the rules of the Conference for this purpose. The rules were not suspended, two-thirds not voting in the affirmative. It was then moved by Robert Paine, "That it is the sense of this General Conference that the suspended resolutions, making the presiding elders elective, etc., are considered as unfinished business, and are neither to be inserted in the revised form of the Discipline, nor to be carried into operation before the next General Conference." The rules of the Conference were on motion suspended to consider the above resolution, which was then adopted.

The Committee on Addresses, Memorials, and Petitions re-

ported that it was inexpedient to recommend a lay delegation, and submitted a circular, to be signed by the bishops, and sent in answer to the memorials, petitions, etc. The book agents were directed to print fifteen hundred copies to be directed to the memorialists, or placed in the hands of the presiding elders to be distributed among the members. As this circular does not appear in the Journal of the General Conference of 1824, a copy of it is inserted here.

Circular.

Beloved Brethren,

Several memorials have been brought up to the General Conference, proposing to change the present order of our Church Government. By one or more of these it is proposed, "to admit into the Annual Conferences, a lay delegate from each circuit and station; and into the General Conference, an equal delegation of Ministers and lay members:" Or, "to admit a representation of local preachers and lay members into the General Conference; to be so apportioned with the itinerant ministry as to secure an equilibrium of influence in that body:" Or, "that the General Conference call a convention, to consist of representatives from each Annual Conference, and an equal number of representatives chosen by the members of each circuit or station, to form a constitution which shall be binding upon each member of our Church:" Or, "that a representation of the local preachers and the membership be introduced into the General Conference," either by electing delegates separately, or that the membership be represented by the local ministry, they being elected by the united suffrage of the local preachers and lay members.

To these memorials, as well as to others, praying the continuance of our government in its present form, we have given an attentive hearing in full Conference; and after much reflection, we reply:—

We are glad to be assured that there exists but one opinion among all our brethren, respecting the importance of our itinerant ministry; and that they who desire a change, whether of the form of the General Conference alone, or of the Annual Conferences also, are moved to solicit it, rather by their zeal to support the itinerancy, than for want of attachment to it. They would relieve the preachers of the delicacy of fixing the amount of their own salaries; and as in this matter they could act more independently, so they would also provide more liberally.

We respectfully acknowledge the candour of brethren, who, although they intimate that it is unseemly for the preachers to determine their own salaries, yet do not pretend that their allowance is excessive, nor that they claim a right to demand it. It is true that

the deficiency of quarterage is so general, in such large proportions, that the Conference collections, and the dividends from the Book Concern and Chartered Fund have never been sufficient to supply it: and indeed, the Conference Stewards usually settle with the preachers, at a discount of from thirty to sixty per cent.

But we presume that these facts have been generally known; so that whatever injury may be sustained from the scantiness of our support, is attributable not to the improvidence of the rule which limits the amount, but to some other cause; and whatever that cause may be, we at least have no information that the people refuse to contribute, because they are not represented. Indeed, it would grieve us to know this; for even though they should refuse to acknowledge us as their representatives in the General Conference, they can not do less for the love of Christ, than they would oblige themselves to do out of love for authority.

We rejoice to know that the proposed change is not contemplated as a remedy for evils which now exist in some infraction of the rights and privileges of the people, as defined to them by the form of discipline; but that it is offered, either in anticipation of the possible existence of such evils, or else on a supposition of abstract rights, which in the opinion of some, should form a basis of our government.

The rights and privileges of our brethren, as members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we hold most sacred. We are unconscious of having infringed them in any instance; nor would we do so. The limitations and restrictions, which describe the extent of our authority in General Conference, and beyond which we have never acted, vindicate our sincerity in this assertion. By those "restrictions," it is put out of the power of the General Conference "to revoke, alter or change our articles of religion; or to revoke or change the general rules," or, "to do away the privileges of our members of trial before the Society or by a committee, and of an appeal." The general rules and the articles of religion, form to every member of our Church, *distinctively*, a constitution, by which as Methodists and as Christians, ye do well to be governed; and we, assembled together to make rules and regulations for the Church, most cheerfully acknowledge that the restrictions above mentioned, are as solemnly binding upon us as the general rules are upon both us and you individually.

These restrictions are to you the guarantee of your "rights and privileges," and while we shall be governed by these as such, we will also regard them as the pledge of your confidence in us.

But if by "rights and privileges," it is intended to signify something foreign from the institutions of the Church, as we received them from our fathers, pardon us if we know no such rights, if we do not comprehend such privileges. With our brethren everywhere, we rejoice that the institutions of our happy country are admirably calculated to secure the best ends of civil government. With their

Lay rep'n refused.

rights, as citizens of these United States, the Church disclaims all interference; but, that it should be inferred from these, what are your rights as Methodists, seems to us no less surprising, than if your Methodism should be made the criterion of your rights as citizens.

We believe the proposed change to be inexpedient:

1. Because it would create a distinction of interests between the itinerancy and the membership of the Church.

2. Because it presupposes that, either the authority of the General Conference "to make rules and regulations," for the Church, or the manner in which this authority has been exercised, is displeasing to the Church; the reverse of which we believe to be true.

3. Because it would involve a tedious procedure, inconvenient in itself, and calculated to agitate the Church to her injury.

4. Because it would give to those districts which are conveniently situated, and could therefore secure the attendance of their delegates, an undue influence in the government of the Church.

With respect to lesser matters, mentioned in the memorials, we respectfully refer you to the revised copy of the discipline forthwith to be published.

SIGNED BY ORDER OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

WILLIAM M'KENDREE.
ENOCH GEORGE.
ROBERT R. ROBERTS.

Baltimore, May 25, 1824.

The resolutions of the General Conference which are not made a part of the Discipline, but which relate to the duties of preachers on their circuits, etc., were ordered to be printed by the book agents as circulars, and sent to the several districts to be given by the presiding elders to the preachers. It is now customary to print these resolutions and advices of the General Conference, with other items of interest to the Church, as an Appendix to the Discipline.

Pittsburgh was selected as the place for holding the General Conference of 1828. Bishop McKendree was requested to continue to render such aid as he could to the episcopacy, consistently with his age and infirmities, when and where it might best suit his own convenience, and it was ordered that the provisions of the last General Conference for meeting his contingent expenses be continued. This was intended to embrace all expenses that may arise, either from personal infirmity or necessary aid in a traveling companion, or otherwise.

The bishops were requested jointly to address a pastoral

letter to our people at as early a day as might be convenient, and the book agents were directed to publish eight thousand five hundred copies thereof, and distribute them for circulation to the presiding elders throughout the Connection. The bishops were also authorized so to arrange their work among themselves as best to suit their condition of health, strength, and general supervision, and to meet annually for this purpose.

A large number of changes and additions were made in the Discipline, some of them merely verbal; and in order to have these alterations properly incorporated, Nathan Bangs, Daniel Ostrander, and Peter P. Sandford were appointed to edit it preparatory to printing the new edition.

The number of annual conferences was increased from twelve to seventeen, and the boundaries of each were defined. Much work was done affecting the general interests of the Church, and after a busy and profitable session, the Conference adjourned on the 28th day of the month.

1828.

PITTSBURGH was the place appointed for the General Conference of 1828. There were seventeen annual conferences represented, and one hundred and seventy-six delegates elected, of whom all were present at the beginning of the session, except seven. Bishop McKendree opened the Conference in the usual manner, after which John Emory was appointed secretary *pro tem.* As soon as the organization was effected, Martin Ruter was elected secretary, and an address from the bishops was read, giving a general view of the state of the Church, and recommending some important measures for consideration. During the past four years there had been a good deal of restlessness in many of the societies on account of the presiding elder question and the "mutual rights" of the clergy and the laity; and a large number, both of the preachers and people, had withdrawn or been expelled from the Church and organized a new communion. They were generally known as "Reformers;" their movement was called the "Radical" movement; their leagues were styled "Union Societies," and the Church they formed was named "The Methodist Protestant Church." There was bitter feeling on both sides, and ecclesiastical animosities are the hardest to overcome.

Committees were appointed on Public Services, Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Expenses of Delegates, Divisions and Boundaries, Book Concern, and Rules of Order. The Committee on Rules of Order reported on the second day of the session, and their report, with some amendments and additions, was adopted. Two hundred copies of the Rules were ordered to be printed for the use of the Conference, together with the Address of the Bishops, and the names and lodging places of the delegates.

The several matters named in the Address of the Bishops were referred to the appropriate committees for consideration; and the following additional committees were appointed: On Elections and Privileges, Sunday-schools and Tracts, Appointment of a delegate to the British Conference, Education, Memorials and Petitions, Local Preachers, Ardent Spirits (or Tem-

perance), Churches and Parsonages, Temporal Economy, and Revisal and Unfinished Business.

The Canada brethren presented a petition, praying that they be separated from the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States (their work was now connected with the Canada Conference). This petition was referred to a select committee of seven, but was finally not granted. It was ordered that petitions and memorials be hereafter called for in the order of the conferences, as printed in the Minutes, beginning with the Pittsburgh Conference.

Joshua Randall, who was expelled from the New England Conference for denying that there is any need of an atonement for sin, appealed to the Conference; but after a full hearing of the case, the decision of his conference was sustained. The Committee on Revisal and Unfinished Business was instructed to take the Discipline under review, and report what alterations it may be important to make in its phraseology.

The Committee on the Book Concern was instructed to inquire into the expediency of having a copy of the yearly reports of the Book Committee at New York forwarded to each of the annual conferences. William Houston, who had been located against his will by the Baltimore Conference, appealed from this action; which, upon hearing, was reversed. William Cunningham and Charles Waddel, of the Ohio Conference; William C. Pool and Dennis B. Dorsey, of the Baltimore Conference; and Joseph Crawford, of the New York Conference, also appealed. After a proper consideration of their cases, the action of their conferences was allowed to stand;—the appeals of Cunningham, Waddel, and Crawford not being admitted. Dennis B. Dorsey and William C. Pool had been expelled from their conference for agitating on the subject of ecclesiastical "reform," forming "Union Societies," circulating inflammatory documents, especially the "Mutual Rights," published by the "Reformers," sowing dissensions and fomenting discontent among the members of the Church; but as this was regarded as leading to schism rather than an immorality, the Conference, on motion of John Emory, adopted a preamble and resolutions intended to cover these and similar cases, and to secure their restoration to the Church. The terms on which persons

who had been expelled or withdrawn might be restored were stated in the resolution as follows:

"If any persons expelled as aforesaid feel free to concede that publications have appeared in said 'Mutual Rights,' the nature and character of which were unjustifiable, inflammatory, and do not admit of justification, and that others, though for want of proper information, or unintentionally, have yet in fact misrepresented individuals and facts, and that they regret these things; if it be voluntarily agreed, also, that the Union Societies above alluded to shall be abolished, and the periodical called 'Mutual Rights' be discontinued at the close of the current volume, which shall be completed with due respect to the conciliatory and pacific design of this arrangement, then this General Conference does hereby give authority for the restoration to their ministry or membership, respectively, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of any person or persons so expelled as aforesaid; provided this arrangement shall be mutually assented to by any individual or individuals so expelled, and also by the quarterly meeting conference and the minister or preacher having the charge in any circuit or station within which any expulsion may have taken place; and that no such minister or preacher shall be obliged, under this arrangement, to restore any such individual as leader of any class or classes, unless in his own discretion he shall judge it proper to do so; and provided, also, that it further be mutually agreed that no other periodical publication to be devoted to the same controversy shall be established on either side; it being expressly understood at the same time that this, if agreed to, will be on the ground, not of any assumption of rights to require this, but of mutual consent for the restoration of peace, and that no individual will be hereby precluded from issuing any publication which he may judge proper on his own responsibility. It is further understood that any individual or individuals, who may have withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church on account of any proceedings in relation to the premises, may also be restored by mutual consent under this arrangement, and the same principles as above stated."

This arrangement did not effect its purpose, and it is believed that not a single one of the expelled or withdrawn "Reformers"' came back to the Church.

The trustees of the Chartered Fund reported their doings during the last quadrennium, and George Ireland was elected to fill a vacancy in their board. The Committee on Itinerancy reported that it was expedient to send a delegate or representative to the next ensuing British Conference, and recommended

the Conference to elect such delegate at its present session, his expenses to be paid by the Book Concern. The report was adopted, and William Capers was elected delegate. The bishops were authorized, in case the delegate thus elected should be prevented from going, to appoint one in his place; and if a delegation to the ensuing British Conference should fail of going, a representative should be sent to the one next following.

A communication in the "Mutual Rights" having reflected upon the official conduct and character of Bishop Hedding, in relation to an address which he made before the members of the Pittsburgh Conference in August, 1826, the bishop asked that the matter complained of be referred to the Committee on Episcopacy for examination. The article was signed "Timothy" (understood to be Rev. George Brown, afterward a leading minister in the Methodist Protestant Church). The committee took the pains to inquire of many members of the Pittsburgh Conference as to their recollection of what the bishop said; and a paper was read before them, containing an accurate outline of the address, made by the author himself, as well as he was able to give it, from his own recollection. Having thus made diligent inquiry into the matter, the committee in their report to the Conference proceed to say:

"The bishop then pointed out the injustice, misrepresentation, and slander of his character, which he considered as pervading the address signed 'Timothy;' after which the author of that article, having been permitted to address the committee, acknowledged that in not properly distinguishing in two instances, he had done injustice, giving the general character of the bishop's address; that some of the inferences he had drawn were unjust, and that as his premises were incorrect, all the inferences drawn from them might be erroneous.

"Your committee beg leave therefore to declare, as the result of their investigation in this matter, that they consider the view presented in the bishop's note to the editor of the 'Mutual Rights' of the article signed 'Timothy' to have been strictly correct.

"The committee would further declare that, in their opinion, the address of Bishop Hedding, as recollected by himself and the delegates of the Pittsburgh Annual Conference, not only was not deserving of censure, but was such as the circumstances of the case rendered it his official duty to deliver."

The presiding elder question was again mooted by the introduction of a resolution, offered by Daniel Ostrander and seconded by Timothy Merritt, to the effect that "each annual conference shall elect its own presiding elders for its respective districts; and the presiding elders when so chosen shall be an efficient council to assist the bishops in the appointments of the preachers to their several circuits and stations." The resolution was laid on the table; so the method of appointing presiding elders was left unchanged, and their appointment was still at the discretion of the bishops presiding over the several conferences where the selection is made. The Conference passed the following resolution, which thus, for the time, settled the matter:

"*Resolved*, That the resolutions commonly called the suspended resolutions, rendering the presiding elders elective, etc., and which were referred to this Conference by the last General Conference as unfinished business, and reported to us at this Conference, be, and the same are hereby, rescinded and made void."

The bishops were requested to prepare and give to William Capers, elected a delegate to the British Conference, the necessary commission and instructions to effect the important objects for which he was sent. The Book Concern was directed to pay the expenses of himself and family during the time of his absence from this country.

The Conference passed resolutions approving of the objects proposed and the measures taken by the American Colonization Society. The Book Committee in New York and the Book Agents, together with the bishop or bishops who may be present, were appointed a committee to edit the Discipline and incorporate the amendments made at this session of the General Conference. The report of the Committee on the Book Concern, recommending the formation of a Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for the purpose of supplying our people with copies of the Word of God at low prices, was adopted. The Society was formed according to this action, but it was short-lived; though the Book Concern has always had on sale its own editions of the Bible. For the general circulation of the Holy Scriptures among our societies, the editions of the American Bible Society were soon after recom-

mended, and annual collections for that society have long been taken up in our Churches.

Nathan Bangs, John Early, and Lovick Pierce were appointed a committee to prepare an address to the British Conference, to be delivered through the delegate appointed to visit that Conference. The address which they reported was, on motion, adopted.

The trustees of every circuit or station were made responsible to the quarterly meeting conference for their official acts, and were required to present annually a report of their acts during the preceding year. It was made the duty of every preacher of a circuit or station to form Sunday-schools. Though it had heretofore been the duty of the preachers to form the children of their congregations into classes for the purpose of giving them religious instruction, and to encourage the establishment and progress of Sunday-schools, this is the first time when Sunday-schools, to be organized by the preachers in charge, were introduced by name into the Discipline. A few such schools had been in existence in the Methodist societies from the first, but they were now made a regular institution of the Church. Provision was also made for the publication of Sunday-school books and tracts, and the Child's Magazine.

The Conference ordered that a change in the Proviso, added to the general Restrictive Rules, be submitted to the annual conferences, so that it might read as follows:

"*Provided,* nevertheless, that upon the concurrent recommendation of three-fourths of all the members of the several annual conferences who shall be present and vote on such recommendation, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding shall suffice to alter any of such regulations excepting the first article.

"And, also, whenever such alteration or alterations shall have first been recommended by two-thirds of the General Conference, so soon as three-fourths of the members of the annual conferences shall have concurred, as aforesaid, with such recommendation, such alteration or alterations shall take effect."

Sundry alterations were made in the Discipline, but the Conference refused to allow lay delegation in either the annual or General Conferences, though a number of memorials asking for it were presented. The conduct of the bishops was ap-

proved. A sermon preached by Bishop Soule before the South Carolina Conference, and printed in pamphlet form, was by some thought to contain doctrines at variance with our standards; but the Committee on Episcopacy having examined the same, reported "that there is nothing in the sermon, fairly construed, inconsistent with our articles of religion, as illustrated in the writings of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher." Bishops McKendree and Hedding, on account of their state of health, were allowed their own discretion in traveling at large through the Connexion, and taking the oversight and superintendence as they might find it prudent and practicable.

The report of the Committee on Ardent Spirits having been laid on the table, and not again called up for action on the part of the Conference, just before the session of the Conference closed, Wilbur Fisk offered the following preamble and resolutions, which were adopted, as follows:

"WHEREAS, The rules and examples of the Wesleyan Methodists from the commencement of their existence as a people, both in Europe and America, were calculated to suppress intemperance and to discountenance the needless use of ardent spirits; and

"WHEREAS, The public mind in our country for a few years past has been remarkably awakened to a sense of the importance of this subject; therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1. That we rejoice in all the laudable and proper efforts now making to promote this just object, so important to the interests both of the Church and nation.

"*Resolved*, 2. That all our preachers and people be expected, and they are hereby expected, to adhere to their first principles, as contained in their excellent rules on this subject, and as practiced by our fathers, and to do all they prudently can, both by precept and example, to suppress intemperance throughout the land.

"*Resolved*, 3. That to bring about the reformation desired on this subject, it is important that we neither drink ourselves, except medicinally, nor give it to visitors or workmen."

John Emory was elected Editor, Agent, and General Book Steward for New York, and Beverly Waugh was elected Assistant. Nathan Bangs was elected Editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*. For the Western Book Concern at Cincinnati, Charles Holliday was elected Agent.

It appears that up to this year, all the annual conferences sat with closed doors, none being admitted except members of

the conference; even probationers for the ministry being excluded. This was the case generally with the General Conference, though by degrees traveling elders, and other ministers were admitted to the galleries of the church where the Conference assembled. After the agitations on the subject of lay representation, which culminated at this time, this strictness was relaxed, until all the conferences were opened to the public.

Philadelphia was selected as the place for holding the next General Conference, and on Saturday, May 24th, the Conference adjourned.

1832.

THE Conference met this year in Philadelphia, May 1st. Bishop Soule opened the session with the customary religious exercises. Martin Ruter, Secretary of the last General Conference, was requested to call the roll of the delegates. Nineteen conferences were represented, and one hundred and ninety-seven delegates were in attendance. After the Conference was organized, Thomas L. Douglass was elected Secretary and Charles A. Davis Assistant Secretary. The rules of order of the previous General Conference, with a few amendments, were adopted.

An Address from the bishops was read, and on motion it was ordered that three hundred copies of it be printed, together with the rules of order, the names of the delegates, and their places of abode during the session. The following committees were appointed: On Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, Privileges and Elections, Missions, Book Concern, Education, Revisals, Bible, Tract and Sunday-school Societies, Slavery, including the Condition, Rights and Privileges of People of Color, Temperance, and the Building and Occupying of Houses of Worship. A committee was also appointed to inquire into the expenses of the delegates and report thereon. The various topics mentioned in the Episcopal Address were referred to the appropriate committees.

The Committee on Revisals were instructed to take into consideration the several sections of the Discipline with regard to the more equitable distribution of the proceeds of the Book Concern; the manner of raising supplies for the traveling preachers and their families; the collating and extending our statistical tables in the Minutes; local preachers, and their ordination; the receiving and trying of members; certain alterations suggested in the ritual for baptism and the Lord's Supper; the procuring and keeping permanent Church records in every charge; the continuance of missionaries at home and abroad on their stations for more than two years; conduct of

members; locating traveling preachers; trials and expulsion of Church members, and sundry changes in the phraseology of the Discipline.

An address from the delegates of the Canada Methodist Episcopal Church was read, and the portion of it relating to the claims on the Book Concern was referred to the Committee on the Book Concern, and that part relating to missions to the Committee on Missions.

Bishop McKendree being in feeble health was seldom able to be present during the sessions of the Conference, but he delivered a brief congratulatory address to the preachers in attendance on the fifth day of the Conference, and then retired. Ignatius H. Tackett appealed from the decision of the Pittsburgh Conference, but the action of that Conference was not confirmed.

The Conference requested the bishops to appoint one of their number to preach a funeral discourse on the death of Bishop George, who had died during the last quadrennium, at such time as might suit their convenience during the present session of the Conference. The trustees of the Chartered Fund asked authority to seek from the Pennsylvania Legislature a change in the name of their trust from "The Trustees of the Fund for the Relief and Support of the Itinerant, Superannuated, Worn-out Ministers and Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, their Wives and Children, Widows and Orphans," to "The Chartered Fund of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." They also asked that the limit be removed as to the amount of their income. The original title of the trust was so long and cumbrous that cases had occurred in which legacies had been left to the Fund, misnaming it, and in consequence law suits had occurred. Lemuel Green, one of the trustees having died, Aquila A. Browne was elected in his stead.

Twenty-two conferences were arranged for and their boundaries were defined. The Committee on Temperance was directed to prepare an address to the Church at large on the subject of temperance, and report the same to the General Conference. The report of the Committee which had already been submitted

for action was then laid on the table until the Address should be ready.

The proposed alteration of the proviso at the end of the Restrictive Rules, recommended at the last General Conference, having been submitted to the annual conferences for their action, was reported to have been passed by all of them in full and due form. It was thereupon recommended by the Committee on Itinerancy that the present General Conference concur in this action. On taking the vote, the alteration was adopted unanimously.

The monthly *Methodist Magazine* in 1830 was changed into a quarterly. The agents had already been instructed to publish portraits of leading preachers in it, and several had appeared. The following resolution on this subject was passed:

"*Resolved*, That inasmuch as any preachers, who shall supply the Book Concern with sketches of their likenesses for the purpose of having them engraved, are expected to obtain the sketches at their own expense, it is expedient that the whole business be submitted to the management of the Book Agents, leaving them to select such as are willing to bear the expenses, and, at the same time having some respect to the age of the preachers and the time they have been in the ministry."

This resolution, though clumsily worded, does not seem to be very encouraging to personal vanity. It saved the agents probably a deal of correspondence and offense giving.

The subject of Temperance received proper attention, both in the Committee on Temperance and in the Conference. Wilbur Fisk was requested to deliver a sermon on the subject on Tuesday evening, May 15th. The report of the Committee which had been laid on the table was taken up and passed, and the Address which they prepared was adopted on the last day of the session. It was ordered to be published in the *Advocate and Journal*, and as a tract.

A communication from the British Wesleyan Conference to the bishops was read in the Conference, stating that it was not convenient for them to send delegates to visit the United States at the present session.

The Committee on Episcopacy reported, recommending the election of three additional bishops. The report was amended

by inserting two instead of three, and was then adopted. Friday, May 18th, was observed as a day of fasting and prayer, preparatory to the election of bishops. The ballots were cast on Tuesday, 22d, and James Osgood Andrew had one hundred and forty votes and John Emory had one hundred and thirty-five. Each of them having a majority of the whole was declared elected. Both were ordained on Friday, May 25th, immediately after the funeral discourse by Bishop McKendree on the death of Bishop George.

The Committee on Itinerancy reported, recommending a change in the Restrictive Rules, so that the ratio of representation in the General Conference, should be not more than one representative for every fourteen members of the annual conference, nor less than one for every thirty; and if this change should be authorized by the annual conferences, then the ratio for the General Conference of 1836 should be one for every fourteen, and the change should be embodied in the Disciplines published subsequent to the vote authorizing the change. The report was adopted.

The Hymn Book heretofore in use among the Methodists had been thoroughly revised and enlarged through the action of the Book Agents in New York, a number of hymns that had been altered by the former compilers or editors were restored to their original state as they came from the poetical pens of Charles and John Wesley, a few were selected from other authors, the two books of the old collection were combined into one, and the hymns were arranged under appropriate heads. This revised Hymn Book was submitted to the General Conference, approved by that body, and ordered to be published as the standard hymn-book of the Church. The tunes appropriate to the several hymns were printed in the *Methodist Harmonist;* and in the new hymn-book, the tune, and page where it could be found, were indicated at the head of each hymn.

The claims of the Canada Conference, which by consent of the General Conference had recently become an independent organization under the name of "The Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada," upon the Book Concern were amicably adjusted by the adoption of a report brought in by the Com-

mittee on that subject. The principal points of this settlement, to be voted on and concurred in by the annual conferences before taking effect, were: 1. The dividend to be made according to the proportion that the number of traveling preachers in Canada Conference bore to the number of traveling preachers in the United States, superannuated preachers and those on trial to be included. 2. The amount to be divided to be reckoned according to the first and largest estimate of stock in the last exhibit of the Book Agents ($448,745.70½) deducting therefrom debts due by the Concern, annuities, etc., estimated at $15,728.18, and the whole amount of the publishing fund, $16,928.28, making a total reduction, including credits to be allowed to Martin Ruter and Charles Holliday, of $35,178.77;—leaving the amount to be divided $413,-566.93½. 3. The Canada Conference to receive a full proportion of the unsalable and salable stock, and of the bad as well as the good debts, considering stock and debts in Canada that belong to the Book Concern as so much of the dividend already paid, according to the manner of estimating the whole amount. 4. When the adjustment should be made according to the foregoing preliminaries, it was to be accepted as a final settlement of all claims which the Canada Conference might be supposed to have on the Book Concern, or any other funds or property of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. Meanwhile, the Canada Conference was to receive the same equal proportion of the Book Concern dividends as before.

The expenses of the delegates were found to amount to $12,713.56½, of which there was collected in the conferences $7,426.73, leaving a deficiency to be provided for, of $5,222.17½ ($45 to be added to the Philadelphia and Virginia Conferences). The balance was ordered to be paid, as heretofore, out of the proceeds of the Book Concern.

Nathan Bangs was elected editor of the *Quarterly Review* and of books. John P. Durbin was elected editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and Peter Akers assistant editor; but as he declined to serve, Timothy Merritt was elected in his stead. Beverly Waugh was elected Book Agent in New York and Thomas Mason Assistant Agent. The Book Committee having recommended that there be two agents in the West,

and the Conference having so ordered, Charles Holliday was elected Book Agent for Cincinnati, and John F. Wright assistant. William M. Curtis was nominated and elected agent at New Orleans.

Daniel Ostrander, Nathan Bangs and Beverly Waugh were appointed a Committee to make the proper selections from the Journal for the Discipline, and to edit the same. Wilbur Fisk, William Capers, Martin Ruter, William McMahon and Fitch Reed were appointed a Committee to answer the letter received from the British Conference.

The bishops were authorized to ordain to the episcopacy any elder whom the Canada Conference should, previously to the next General Conference, elect to the office of bishop in that Conference. They were also authorized to appoint any of the preachers to colleges not under the direction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to continue him in that relation the same as in institutions of learning controlled or patronized by us.

The address to the British Conference, prepared by the committee appointed for this purpose, was read and adopted. The Committee on Revisals reported sundry changes in the Discipline, which were adopted; Cincinnati was chosen as the place for holding the next General Conference; and on the 28th day of the month, the Conference adjourned.

1836.

THE General Conference this year met in Cincinnati on Monday, May 2. The sessions were held in Wesley Chapel on Fifth street. This was the largest church in the city, having an audience capacity for one thousand persons. It was also the oldest church of Methodism in Cincinnati, the society having been organized in 1804. In the little graveyard in the rear slept the remains of some of the pioneer preachers. The old-time hospitality had not died out, and there was no difficulty in finding places of entertainment for all of the delegates and visiting brethren.

One hundred and fifty delegates were in attendance, and all except four were present at the opening. During the quadrennium Bishops McKendree and Emory had died, and Bishop Roberts presided during the preliminary exercises. Thomas L. Douglass was elected secretary and Thomas B. Sargent assistant. Later in the session, John A. Collins was also made an assistant secretary. Rules of order were then adopted.

By a resolution of the Conference, the bishops were requested to deliver, at their convenience, during the session discourses on the death of their colleagues, McKendree and Emory. In compliance with this request, Bishop Soule preached a funeral sermon concerning Bishop McKendree, and Bishop Roberts concerning Bishop Emory. Both discourses were requested for publication. Bishop Soule stated that all the papers of Bishop McKendree had, by his last will and testament, come into his hands, and suggested that the Conference take some action in relation to them, and direct that a memoir of his life be published and an inscription be prepared for his tomb. On motion Bishop Soule was requested to write both. The bishop never found time to prepare the memoir, and the Life of Bishop McKendree was not written until many years subsequently.

An address from the British Conference was presented and read on the second day of the session, but to a large number of the members it was distasteful on account of its references

to slavery. Thus that subject was precipitated upon the Conference early in the session. On motion of Nathan Bangs, it was

"*Resolved*, That the address just read be referred to a special committee of three, and that they be required to prepare an answer as speedily as practicable, and to provide for the appointment of a delegate to represent us to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference."

Orange Scott offered a motion to print the Address in all the official journals of the Church, and while the matter was under discussion, it was on motion of Stephen G. Roszel resolved to postpone the further consideration of printing the address until the committee appointed to answer it reported to the Conference. This committee consisted of Nathan Bangs, William Capers and Thomas A. Morris.

The usual standing committees were appointed, and committees were ordered on Temperance, Allowance of Ministers, Parsonages and Churches, Bible, Sunday-school and Tract Societies, Superannuated Preachers who reside out of the bounds of their own conferences, and on Canada affairs.

When the Conference assembled on May 5th, the Committee on Answer to the British Conference brought in their report. The section on the subject of slavery was not entirely acceptable; but most, if not all, the objections to it came from members who, though opposed to slavery in the abstract, were not abolitionists. Various alterations and amendments were proposed, and once a motion was made to strike out all that related to slavery. The answer, as finally adopted, was much modified in language, and neither censured abolitionism nor condemned slavery. But when it was moved to print both the address and the reply, the motion was lost.

A Committee on Slavery having been appointed, all memorials relating to that subject were referred to them. Their report was brief, and averse to any new action on the part of the Conference, and any agitation on the subject.

But the report of the Committee did not quiet agitation on the subject, though it was adopted by a large majority. Long before the assembling of the Conference, "the irrepressible conflict" had begun. It broke out afresh when it became known that two of the members of the Conference had attended an

anti-slavery meeting in Cincinnati, and had there made abolition addresses. These members were George Storrs and Samuel Norris, both of the New Hampshire Conference. Stephen G. Roszel offered the following preamble and resolutions which were discussed for the better part of two days, and then carried by a vote, on the first resolution, of 122 in favor and 11 against it: '

"WHEREAS, Great excitement has prevailed in this country on the subject of modern abolitionism, which is reported to have been increased in this city recently by the unjustifiable conduct of two members of the General Conference, in lecturing upon and in favor of that agitating subject; and

"WHEREAS, Such a course on the part of any of its members is calculated to bring upon this body the suspicions and distrust of the community, and misrepresent its sentiments in regard to the point at issue; and

"WHEREAS, In this aspect of the case a due regard for its own character as well as a just concern for the interests of the Church confided to its care, demand a full, decided, and unequivocal expression of the views of the General Conference in the premises; therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1. That the delegates of the annual conferences in General Conference assembled disapprove in the most unqualified sense the conduct of two members of the General Conference, who are reported to have lectured in this city recently upon and in favor of modern abolitionism.

"*Resolved*, 2. That they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slaveholding states of this Union.

"*Resolved*, 3. That the foregoing preamble and resolutions be published in our periodicals."

No doubt the abolitionists of that day were exasperating and bitter in their denunciations, and delighted in agitation; but those who opposed their methods were not all lovers of slavery. Both the North and South, in their mutual antagonism, forgot the Divine maxim, "He that believeth shall not make haste." The cause for which the abolitionists contended, the cessation of slavery, finally prevailed. The sentiments of the Church as well as of the nation secured its final overthrow; and it is pleasing to know that the foregoing preamble and resolutions were rescinded by the General Conference of 1868, and ordered to be expunged from the Journal.

But to show how the slavery interests had debauched the public conscience, when a committee was appointed to prepare a Pastoral Address to the members of the Church, it was moved by Mr. Roszel and Samuel Luckey that the committee be instructed to incorporate in it a section against abolitionism. Orange Scott moved as an amendment that a paragraph on slavery be also included; whereupon Mr. Roszel withdrew his motion. It will be seen, however, that the suggestion made by Mr. Roszel was acted upon, notwithstanding his motion was withdrawn. The Pastoral Address as adopted says:

"It is not unknown to you, dear brethren and friends, that in common with other denominations in our land, as well as our citizens generally, we have been much agitated in some portions of our work with the very excitable subject of what is called abolitionism. This subject has been brought before us at the present session—fully, and we humbly trust, impartially discussed, and by almost a unanimous vote highly disapproved of; and while we would tenderly sympathize with those of our brethren who have, as we believe, been led astray by this exciting topic, we feel it our imperative duty to express our decided disapprobation of the measures they have pursued to accomplish their object. It can not be unknown to you that the question of slavery in these United States, by the constitutional compact which binds us together as a nation, is left to be regulated by the several state legislatures themselves; and thereby is put beyond the control of the general government, as well as that of all ecclesiastical bodies; it being manifest that in the slaveholding states themselves, the entire responsibility of its existence or non-existence rests with those state legislatures. And such is the aspect of affairs in reference to this question, that whatever else might tend to meliorate the condition of the slave, it is evident to us, from what we have witnessed of abolition movements, that these are the least likely to do him good. On the contrary, we have it in the evidence before us, that their inflammatory speeches and writings and movements have tended, in many instances, injuriously to affect his temporal and spiritual condition, by hedging up the way of the missionary who is sent to preach to him Jesus and the resurrection, and by making a more rigid supervision necessary on the part of his overseer, thereby abridging his civil and religious privileges.

"These facts, which are only mentioned here as a reason for the friendly admonition which we wish to give you, constrain us, as your pastors, who are called to watch over your souls as they who must give an account, to exhort you to abstain from all abolition movements and associations, and to refrain from patronizing

any of their publications, and especially those of that inflammatory character which denounce in unmeasured terms those of their brethren who take the liberty to dissent from them. Those of you who may have honest scruples as to the lawfulness of slavery, considered as an abstract principle of moral right and wrong, if you must speak your sentiments, would do much better to express yourselves in those terms of respect and affection which evince a sincere sympathy for those of your brethren who are necessarily, and in some instances reluctantly associated with slavery in the states where it exists, than to indulge in harsh censures and denunciations, and in those fruitless efforts, which, instead of lightening the burden of the slave, only tend to make his condition the more irksome and distressing.

"From every view of the subject which we have been able to take, and from the most calm and dispassionate survey of the whole ground, we have come to the solemn conviction that the only safe, scriptural, and prudent way for us, both as ministers and people, to take, is wholly to refrain from the agitating subject which is now convulsing the country, and consequently the Church, from end to end, by calling forth inflammatory speeches, papers, and pamphlets. While we cheerfully accord to such all the sincerity they ask for their belief and motives, we can not but disapprove of their measures, as alike destructive to the peace of the Church, and to the happiness of the slave himself."

As a protest against the action of the General Conference on the subject of abolitionism, and their non-action on slavery, Orange Scott wrote and had printed in pamphlet form an "Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by a Member of that Body," and had it distributed on the seats of the delegates. Upon reading this Address, William Winans and Jonathan Stamper offered the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That a pamphlet circulated among the members of this General Conference, purporting to be an 'Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by a Member of that Body,' containing reports of the discussion on modern abolitionism, palpably false, and calculated to make an impression to the injury of the character of some of the members engaged in the aforesaid discussion, is an outrage on the dignity of this body, and merits unqualified reprehension."

Mr. Scott avowed himself to be the author of the pamphlet in question, and as he considered himself under obligation to defend his course, he requested a copy of the above resolution;

which request was on motion granted. The next day he spoke on the resolution at considerable length, and was replied to by Mr. Winans. On taking the vote, it was carried by 97 in favor to 19 in opposition. The resolution was ordered to be published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal* and the *Western Christian Advocate.*

Two of the bishops having died, and the health of Bishops Roberts, Soule and Hedding being impaired, the Committee on Episcopacy recommended the election of three additional bishops. The report was adopted, and Tuesday, May 24th, was fixed on as the date of the election. On the first ballot, Wilbur Fisk and Beverly Waugh were elected, and on the sixth ballot Thomas A. Morris was chosen. The several ballots are here given from private sources of information, as they are not to be found in the Journal, which contains only the results:

FIRST BALLOT FOR BISHOPS.

Beverly Waugh	85	George Peck	35
Wilbur Fisk	78	Nathan Bangs	26
Thomas A. Morris	76	John Davis	23
William Capers	47	John Early	12
Martin Ruter	54	William Winans	7

whole number of votes, 153; necessary to a choice, 77. So the first two named were elected.

For the third bishop the ballots were as follows:

	2d Ballot.	3d.	4th.	5th.	6th.
Thomas A. Morris	57	59	62	75	86
Martin Ruter	38	47	50	40	29
William Capers	34	35	34	35	30
Nathan Bangs	12	7	2	2	2
Whole number of votes	141	148	148	152	147
Necessary to elect	71	75	75	77	74

When the result of the first ballot was announced, and it was seen that Mr. Morris came within one vote of being elected, he arose from his seat in great agitation, and begged the Conference to drop his name from their ballots. Mr. Winans, who sat three or four seats in front, sprang to his feet, turned round, and playfully shaking his fingers in Mr. Morris's face, peremptorily said, "Sit down, Sir." But as the balloting proceeded, Mr. Morris tried to withdraw from the ballot more

than once, but his friends would not hear to it, and on the sixth ballot, as shown above, he was elected. The two bishops elect, Waugh and Morris, were ordained to the office on Friday morning, May 27th. Wilbur Fisk who was then in Europe, upon his return declined to accept the office, and was not ordained.

Thomas Mason was elected Book Agent in New York and George Lane Assistant Agent. John F. Wright was elected by acclamation Book Agent in Cincinnati, and Leroy Swormstedt Assistant Agent. Samuel Luckey was elected editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal,* the *Methodist Quarterly Review,* and books, and John A. Collins assistant; Charles Elliott was elected editor of the *Western Christian Advocate,* and William Phillips assistant. Official papers were established at Charleston, Richmond and Nashville, and William Capers was elected editor for the first and Thomas Stringfield for the last, the Virginia Conference to elect the editor for the paper in Richmond.

The Constitution of the Missionary Society was revised, and Nathan Bangs was elected resident corresponding secretary. The time limit was removed from the Book Agents, so that they might serve for a longer period than eight years, and they were directed both in New York and Cincinnati, for the purpose of securing the property belonging to the Book Concern more firmly to the General Conference, to obtain acts of incorporation. And the Agents at Cincinnati were authorized, with the advice and consent of the Book Committee, to purchase ground and erect thereon a suitable building for a printing-office, book room and bindery.

The number of annual conferences was increased from twenty-two to twenty-eight, and the ratio of representation in the General Conference was changed from one member for every fourteen members of each annual conference to one for every twenty-one. District conferences were abolished, and their duties were assigned to the quarterly conferences.

A few changes were introduced in the Discipline, and it was ordered that a committee of three be appointed, of which one of the bishops should be chairman, to revise and edit the new edition. The names of the committee are not given.

A communication was presented from William Burke, which was read, and on motion of Thomas L. Douglass, it was

"*Resolved*, That in order to facilitate William Burke's reunion with the Church, the Ohio Annual Conference are hereby respectfully recommended, at their next session, to restore the said William Burke to his former ministerial standing in the Methodist Episcopal Church, if said conference should think it expedient so to do."

This recommendation of the General Conference was effectual, and Mr. Burke was restored to his former standing and placed on the superannuated list, the same year.

It was recommended to the Board of Managers of the Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church to dissolve that society—which was eventually done.

The Conference adjourned on the 27th until the first day of May, 1840.

1840.

WHEN the General Conference of 1840 assembled in the city of Baltimore, on Friday, May 1st, there were twenty-eight conferences represented, and one hundred and thirty delegates. After the opening of the session by Bishop Hedding, and its organization in proper form, John A. Collins was elected secretary and James B. Houghtaling and Thomas B. Sargent were chosen assistant secretaries. Robert Newton and Joseph Sowter, his traveling companion, from the British Conference; Joseph Stinson, President of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Upper Canada, and John Ryerson, representative of the Canada Methodist Episcopal Church, were presented to the Conference by Bishop Roberts. The rules of order of the General Conference of 1836 were then adopted.

On motion of Nathan Bangs the Conference directed that a reporter be employed for the purpose of taking down the proceedings for publication in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and the papers published under the direction of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This was the first effort made to have a full report of the sayings and doings of Conference circulated throughout the Church, and the pioneer movement in the establishment of a daily paper to print the proceedings.

Committees were appointed on the following subjects: On Episcopacy, Boundaries, Itinerancy, Book Concern, Education, Revisal and Unfinished Business, Expenses of Delegates, Temperance, Slavery, Sunday-schools, Centenary Subscriptions, Missions, and Churches and Parsonages.

The bishops presented an address, which was read by Bishop Waugh. The parts relating to various Church matters were referred to the appropriate committees already ordered, and several select committees were appointed. An address from the British Conference was presented and read by the secretary, after which Robert Newton, representative from that body, addressed the Conference in a most effective and impressive style. The address of the British Conference was referred to a special committee of three, and Mr. Newton was requested

to furnish a copy of his own address before the Conference for publication. The Conference also requested him to sit for his likeness in Baltimore or New York, the expense to be paid by the Book Concern.

Joseph Stinson, president of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in Upper Canada presented the certificate of the election of himself, Egerton Ryerson and John Ryerson as delegates to the Conference, and delivered an appropriate address. John Ryerson also addressed the Conference, and copies of the addresses of both were requested for publication. Egerton Ryerson, who happened to be absent at the time, was introduced to the Conference later. William M. Howard, chairman of the Lower Canada District, then addressed the Conference, after which the members and others listened to a sermon preached by Robert Newton, a copy of which was asked for, to be published at the Book Concern, New York.

Though the Church had long before determined the standing of the bishops and the method of appointing presiding elders, still petitions were sent in to the Conference, asking for a "moderate episcopacy," and for the election of presiding elders by the conferences to which they belong. All such petitions were referred to the appropriate committees. Though the prayer of the petitioners was not granted, their right to petition was not, nor ever has been, denied. Petitions asking for lay representation in the General Conference were likewise received and referred. But there was no general or large demand for lay representation in the Church, and it was deemed impolitic at the time to change the established order. Yet as memorials and petitions from the members were numerous, it was thought best to refer all those which related to presiding elders, lay representation, modification of the episcopacy, and kindred subjects, to a select committee; and all papers on these subjects, already referred to other committees, were withdrawn, and put into the hands of the special committee, consisting of William Winans, George Gary, Moses Brock, John T. Mitchell and William C. Larrabee.

The editor of the Discipline was directed to prepare a more perfect index to the same; and the Agents were instructed to publish a duodecimo edition in large, clear type for the use

of Churches, and for members who may prefer it to the small size pocket edition, and to sell it at the lowest price possible for that style of book.

Daniel Dorchester appealed from the action of the New England Conference of 1839, censuring him for exceeding the powers of his office as a presiding elder, and requiring him to pursue a different course in the future. After hearing the case, the Conference reversed the action of the annual conference by a vote of 117 yeas to 17 nays.

The Book Agents were authorized to sell at fifty per cent discount all their books to regularly chartered institutions of learning in the Methodist Episcopal Church, on the certificate of the annual conferences in which such institutions are located, and to send copies of their periodicals free.

The Ohio Conference presented a memorial asking for the publication in the West of a periodical magazine especially for the use of the female members of the Church. The committee to which this memorial was referred brought in a report favoring such a publication, presenting the arguments and facts which sustained their action, and concluding with the following resolutions:

"*Resolved*, 1. That it is expedient to establish a religious periodical for the benefit of females.

"*Resolved*, 2. That the Book Agents at Cincinnati, Ohio, be and they are hereby authorized to commence the publication of such a periodical as soon as in their opinion and in the judgment of the Cincinnati Book Committee there will be sufficient patronage to sustain it.

"*Resolved*, 3. That the periodical aforesaid shall be in pamphlet form, shall be issued monthly, and the amount of matter and the subscription price of each yearly volume shall not exceed those of the Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review."

The report, with these resolutions, was adopted. In accordance with this action of the General Conference, the Western Book Agents undertook the publication of the contemplated magazine, which they named the "Ladies' Repository and Gatherings of the West." It commenced with 32 pages imperial 8vo, and was successively enlarged to 48, 56 and 64 pages, and embellished with steel engravings and other illustrations. The first number was issued in January, 1841, and the

magazine was continued monthly thereafter for 36 years. The second part of the title, "Gatherings of the West," was soon dropped, and the magazine was regarded by the public as the "queen of the monthlies" and "the art-journal of America" on account of its engravings, press-work and paper, all of which were unsurpassed. It at one time attained a circulation of nearly 40,000 copies.

A typographical error in Article XVIII of the Articles of Religion in the last edition of the Discipline—the omission of the words "of the love" after "sign" in the first line—was ordered to be corrected. Orange Scott moved that the word "or," in the General Rule on Slavery, should be substituted for "and," as it originally appeared (in 1792) so that the rule should read: "The buying *or* selling of men, women *or* children with an intention to enslave them." Who made this alteration in the rule is not known, but it was not made by order of the Conference. The editors of the Discipline, however, must be held responsible. Mr. Scott's motion did not prevail, though the error was apparent and acknowledged, but the pro-slavery sentiment was dominant both in Church and state.

Silas Comfort, of the Missouri Conference, appealed from the judgment of that conference in finding him guilty of maladministration. Though passing his character, William Winans moved to affirm the judgment of the conference in finding him guilty, and to reverse their decision, which passed his character without censure. The resolution was discussed in a protracted debate, pending which Mr. Winans withdrew the latter part of his motion. The former part was then put to vote, and lost. So the Conference refused to affirm the decision of the Missouri Conference in the case of Silas Comfort. The maladministration of which he was accused was his admission of testimony from a colored member of the Church against a white brother. The "black laws," as they were called, disgraced the statute books of several free states, especially along the border, as well as of all the slave states. No white man could be convicted of a crime on the testimony of colored persons, in any civil court.

A committee of three was appointed to draw up a pastoral address to our people and friends. The committee consisted

of George Peck, William Capers and L. L. Hamline. Suggested by the action of the Conference in the appeal of Silas Comfort, it was on motion of Ignatius A. Few,

"*Resolved*, That it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher among us to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons in any state where they are denied that privilege in trials at law."

Seventy-four voted in the affirmative and forty-six in the negative. Afterward Daniel Ostrander moved to reconsider the case of Silas Comfort, and the motion being carried, he offered the following preamble and resolution:

"WHEREAS, It appears from the Journal of the General Conference that no censure was fixed upon nor reproof given to Silas Comfort in the vote of said conference, but that he was simply found to have erred in judgment, and his character passed without censure; therefore, after mature deliberation by the General Conference, be it

"*Resolved*, That the appeal of Silas Comfort be not entertained."

The resolution was adopted, and the appeal thrown out.

Appeals were also made by J. V. Potts, of Philadelphia Conference, remanded for new trial; Job Wilson, of Pittsburgh, reversed; James Smith, of Philadelphia, remanded; and Jonas Scott, of New Hampshire, located, reversed.

The question of electing a bishop for Africa was considered, but not ordered. The Committee on the Address from the British Conference made a report, accompanied with letters to that Conference and the Canada Conference, which report and letters were adopted. It was recommended in the report to send a delegate to the British Wesleyan Conference in 1842, and a delegate to the Canada Conference in 1841, and that their expenses be paid by the Book Concern. It was resolved that Bishop Soule be requested to attend the British Conference as delegate in 1842, and that, if he found it impracticable to comply with the wishes of the Conference, the bishops should appoint some suitable person to go as the representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. Bishop Soule was authorized to nominate a suitable traveling companion for himself, to be elected by the Con-

ference. The bishop nominated Thomas B. Sargent, which nomination was unanimously confirmed by a rising vote. Bishop Hedding was requested to represent the Church at the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in Upper Canada in 1841, and in the event of its being impracticable for him to attend, it was made the duty of the bishops to appoint a suitable person to act as delegate in his place.

A series of resolutions offered by Bishop Soule were adopted, explanatory of and supplementary to the action of the Conference on the appeal of Silas Comfort. They were to the effect that "it is not intended to express or imply that the testimony of colored persons against white persons in Church trials is either expedient or justifiable in any of the slaveholding states or territories where the civil laws prohibit such testimony in trials at law;" that the resolution of Ignatius A. Few is not intended "to prohibit such testimony in any of the states or territories where it is the established usage of the Church to admit it, and where in the judgment of the constitutional judicatories of the Church, such testimony may be admitted with safety to the peace of society and the best interests of all concerned;" and that no reflection is intended upon "the Christian integrity of the numerous body of colored members under our pastoral care."

The Conference voted to adopt the *Christian Apologist* (Der Christliche Apologete), a German paper established in 1839 by the Western Book Agents, at Cincinnati; to establish depositories at Pittsburgh and at Charleston, S. C.; to accept the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* and the *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate* as official papers; to establish the *Richmond Christian Advocate*, to enlarge the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, and to establish a depository at Boston.

Thomas Mason was elected Book Agent in New York, and George Lane assistant book agent; John F. Wright was elected Book Agent at Cincinnati, and Leroy Swormstedt assistant book agent. George Peck was elected editor of the *Quarterly Review*, general books, and tracts; Thomas E. Bond of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, *Youth's Magazine*, and Sunday-school books, and George Coles assistant editor. Charles Elliott was elected editor of the *Western Christian Advocate*, and Leon-

idas L. Hamline, assistant editor, to take editorial charge of the new magazine for women, when begun; William Nast of the *Christian Apologist* and German publications; Charles A. Davis of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* at Nashville; William M. Wightman of the *Southern Christian Advocate* at Charleston, and Leroy M. Lee of the *Richmond Christian Advocate.*

Nathan Bangs was elected general secretary of the Missionary Society at New York, Edward R. Ames general secretary for the West, and William Capers for the south. Joseph S. Tomlinson, Henry B. Bascom, Ignatius A. Few, John P. Durbin, Edmund W. Sehon, John Early, and Nathan Bangs were appointed Commissioners of Education.

John F. Wright, Nathaniel Callender, and William Nast were appointed delegates to convey the Christian salutations of the Conference and Church to the Evangelical Association at their General Conference to meet in May, 1841.

The number of the annual conferences was increased from twenty-nine to thirty-four, and a few changes were made in the Discipline. The principal changes were exempting chaplains to state prisons and military posts from the two years' limit, and allowing the appointment of preachers to be agents for our literary institutions; the introduction of a section on receiving preachers from the Wesleyan Connection and from other denominations; giving the bishops authority to decide questions of law in the annual conferences (subject to revisal by the General Conference), and to unite two or more circuits together, without affecting their separate financial interests or the pastoral duties, recasting the section on the instruction of children, and recommending the formation of Sunday-schools under the supervision of the quarterly conferences; defining more clearly the duties of supernumerary preachers, and omitting the section on the sale and use of spirituous liquors.

The expenses of the delegates were $9,170.20; the deficiency $1,061.72, which was ordered to be paid by the Book Concern.

New York was selected as the place for holding the General Conference of 1844, and on the third day of June the Conference adjourned.

1844.

THE General Conference of 1844 met in the city of New York, and was composed of one hundred and eighty delegates, of whom one hundred and fifty-nine were present at the opening of the session. All the bishops were in attendance, and Bishop Soule took the chair and opened the proceedings in the customary manner. Thomas B. Sargent was elected secretary, and James B. Houghtaling and Wesley Kenney were elected assistants. But Mr. Kenney being called home by sickness in his family, before the end of the session, Valentine Buck, pastor of John Street Church, New York, was appointed in his place. A suitable reporter was by resolution ordered to be employed, that he might prepare for publication a correct record of the proceedings. Robert A. West was engaged to act as official reporter; and in his reports he included the debates which he took down in shorthand.

The address of the bishops was read by the senior general superintendent. Standing committees were appointed on the Book Concern, Education, Expenses of Delegates, Temperance, Sunday-schools, Bible Cause, Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, Missions, Slavery, and Revisal. Special committees were also appointed, as occasion arose, on Correspondence, Publication, The Sabbath, Petitions, Memorials, The Church in Canada, Ministerial Support, Course of Study for Licentiates in the Ministry, and on the State of the Church.

The subjects mentioned in the Bishops' Address, requiring attention, were referred to the appropriate committees. The Book Agents, editors, and secretaries of Church societies who were not members of the Conference, and Edmund S. Janes, secretary of the American Bible Society, were invited to occupy seats within the bar, and to speak on matters pertaining to the interests they represented.

The question of slavery in the Church came up early for discussion. Francis A. Harding, of the Baltimore Conference, had been suspended from his ministerial functions by

reason of his becoming a slaveholder, and he appealed from this action to the General Conference. The delegates from the slaveholding states and a few from the free states were in favor of reversing the action of the Baltimore Conference, though it was in strict accordance with the Discipline; but the majority decided that it should stand. The vote on reversing the action was 56 affirmative and 117 negative. Further, many petitions and memorials on the subject of slavery were presented, and were referred to the committee. Thus the lines were drawn between those who opposed the spread of slavery among the ministers and those who favored it.

The appeal of Bradford Frazee, of the Michigan Conference, located without his consent, was heard, and the action of the conference reversed; the appeal of Luman H. Allen, of the North Ohio Conference, was presented, and the action of the conference in suspending him affirmed; William Houston, of Baltimore, located, action reversed; J. S. Lent, of Genesee, located, action affirmed.

Many petitions were presented, asking for the rescission of the resolutions passed by the General Conference of 1840, allowing the testimony of colored persons in certain cases to be received against white members. What are known as the "black laws" were still in force in many of the states, and the petitioners desired the Church law to conform to the civil.

It was known that Bishop James O. Andrew had recently come into possession of two slaves by inheritance, and he had also married a lady who owned slaves when he took her to wife. This connection of the bishop with slavery placed him on the same footing with Francis A. Harding, who had been suspended from his ministerial functions for the same offense—the holding of human beings in bondage in contravention of the order of the Church as set forth in the Discipline. Although he was not arraigned before the Conference, or before the Committee on Episcopacy, it was well understood that there would be a fierce contest between the two great sections of the Church over his case. In fact, the issue was joined before the Conference met. The delegates began in private to discuss the great question of the Church and slavery, and two of the leading members,

Stephen Olin and William Capers, representing the anti-slavery and slavery sentiments, introduced the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That a committee of three from the North and three from the South be appointed to confer with the bishops, and report within two days, as to the possibility of adopting some plan, and what, for the permanent pacification of the Church."

John A. Collins moved to amend the resolution by making it read, "That a committee of six be appointed;" and thus amended the resolution was unanimously adopted. The committee appointed were William Capers, Stephen Olin, William Winans, John Early, Leonidas L. Hamline, and Phineas Crandall.

John P. Durbin offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

"*Resolved*, That to-morrow be observed by this Conference as a day of fasting and humiliation before God, and prayer for his blessing upon the committee of six in conjunction with the bishops, on the present difficulties; and that the hour from twelve to one be devoted to religious services in the Conference."

In accordance with this resolution the hour between twelve and one on Wednesday, May 15th, was observed as a prayer-meeting. Bishop Andrew who was presiding officer during the morning session called Bishop Soule to the chair a few minutes before twelve o'clock. Bishop Soule gave out two hymns which were sung, and at his request, Matthew Richey, representative of Missionary Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in England, John Early, Phineas Crandall, and William Winans led in prayer. Bishop Hedding then assumed the chair, and announced another hymn, after the singing of which William Capers and Gleezen Fillmore offered prayers. Soon after one o'clock, Bishop Hedding pronounced the benediction.

William Capers, John P. Durbin, Peter Akers, Charles Elliott, and Elihu Scott were appointed a committee to prepare on behalf of the Conference a pastoral address to the Churches. William Capers was excused from this committee, June 2d, on his own request.

The delegates from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada presented an address from their Church, which was

read, and referred to the Committee of Publication to be printed, and to the Committee of Correspondence to prepare a reply to it. The delegates from Canada were John Ryerson, Anson Green, and Egerton Ryerson, the first two of whom, only, were present.

The delegation appointed by the General Conference of 1840 to the General Conference of the Evangelical Association which sat in October, 1843, presented its report through John F. Wright. The report and correspondence were read, and referred to the Committee of Publication to be printed.

The Committee of Conference on the subject of pacification with regard to slaveholding in the ministry, and especially in the case of Bishop Andrew, were not able to come to an agreement within the limit assigned them. Bishop Soule requested the delegates from the Northern Conferences to meet at the church where the Conference held its sessions, at three o'clock P. M., on Friday, May 17th; and the delegates from the Southern Conferences to assemble in the lecture-room of the church, at the same hour, to confer about the situation.

James J. Boswell, Samuel Mead, and John Rhile were elected trustees of the Chartered Fund, to fill vacancies in the Board.

On Saturday, May 18th, Bishop Soule in behalf of the Committee of Conference with the bishops, made the following report, which was accepted, and the committee was discharged from further service:

"The Committee of Conference have instructed me to report, that, after a calm and deliberate investigation of the subject submitted to their consideration, they are unable to agree upon any plan of compromise to reconcile the views of the northern and southern conferences."

Although the Committee on Episcopacy had not brought in any report, on the 20th day of May, the case of Bishop Andrew was specially referred to them. John A. Collins offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

"WHEREAS, It is currently reported and generally understood that one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church has become connected with slavery; and

"WHEREAS, It is due to this General Conference to have a proper understanding of the matter; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the Committee on the Episcopacy be instructed to ascertain the facts in the case, and report the results of their investigation to this body to-morrow morning."

The bishops were authorized and requested to form our German missions, where they deemed it necessary, into districts, irrespective of conference boundaries, and to appoint presiding elders to said districts; and it was provided that the German preachers within these districts should be members of the conference to which the presiding elder belonged. William Nast was granted permission to visit Germany, with a view to more extended usefulness among his brethren of the German nation, many of whom were migrating to America.

A committee was appointed to inquire respecting the publication of the Life of Bishop McKendree, to wit: Nathan Bangs, John P. Durbin, and Charles Elliott. It was expected that Bishop Soule would prepare the biography, and he had been appointed to do so, but he informed the Conference that since 1836 his official duties had not allowed him to do more than arrange a large mass of papers bequeathed to himself and the late Thomas L. Douglass by Bishop McKendree. Upon Bishop Soule's report to the Conference, the committee was discharged.

The Life of Bishop Asbury had, also, never been written. William Beauchamp, to whom the work had been intrusted by the General Conference of 1824, died soon after his appointment, and Dr. S. K. Jennings had made but little progress in the undertaking when the papers that he had prepared were placed in the hands of Mr. Beauchamp. In 1828 the General Conference authorized the bishops to appoint some one to write the proposed Life, but nothing had been done. At the present Conference, however, Robert Emory asked permission to examine all the Journals of the General Conference, with a view to preparing a Life of Bishop Asbury. The permission was granted; but the contemplated Life was never written.

Bishop Soule was requested to give, at some suitable time, an account of his visit to the British Conference, and to different parts of the Continent.

The delegates from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, John Ryerson and Anson Green, were requested to address the Conference, and to give some account of the Connection which they represented. This they did; after which they took formal leave. Samuel Luckey, who as the alternate of Bishop Hedding had visited the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Canada, made a brief report of his visit, and of the religious prosperity and progress of their Church.

A committee of one from each conference to be selected by the delegates was ordered to collect and report to the next General Conference, all the papers belonging to this body in reference to the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to collect materials for it, and memoirs of the bishops and other ministers, etc.

On Wednesday, May 21st, the Committee on Episcopacy brought in their report concerning Bishop Andrew's connection with slavery, accompanied with a communication to them from the bishop himself, showing how he had become legally, though not willingly, a slaveholder. The report was laid on the table until the next day. On Thursday, when the report was taken up, Alfred Griffith and John Davis offered a preamble, reciting the facts concerning the bishop's connection with slavery, and concluding with the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the Rev. James O. Andrew be, and he is hereby, affectionately requested to resign his office as one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

This resolution was discussed during the morning and afternoon sessions of Wednesday, May 22d, and on Thursday James B. Finley and Joseph M. Trimble offered a substitute for the resolution, as follows:

"WHEREAS, The Discipline of our Church forbids the doing anything calculated to destroy our itinerant general superintendency; and

"WHEREAS, Bishop Andrew has become connected with slavery by marriage and otherwise, and this act having drawn after it circumstances which in the estimation of the General Conference will greatly embarrass the exercise of his office as an itinerant superintendent, if not in some places entirely prevent it; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains."

The discussion on this substitute continued for several days, such speakers as Stephen Olin, James B. Finley, Benjamin M. Drake, Phineas Crandall, Henry Slicer, W. D. Cass, George F. Pierce, A. B. Longstreet, Jesse T. Peck, A. L. P. Green, William Capers, John Early, Leonidas L. Hamline, Silas Comfort, William A. Smith, John A. Collins, William Winans, Peter Cartwright, Jonathan Stamper, Samuel Dunwody, John P. Durbin, George Peck, and others equally well known, taking part in it.

During the progress of the debate, Bishop Andrew addressed the Conference, giving a full account of his connection with slavery, and of his labors in behalf of the slave population. Bishop Soule also addressed the Conference; and the bishops, colleagues of Bishop Andrew, offered as a peace measure a proposition to postpone further action on the case until the ensuing General Conference. They say: "They can not but think that if the embarrassment of Bishop Andrew shall not cease before that time, the next General Conference representing the pastors, ministers, and people of the several annual conferences, after all the facts in the case shall have passed in review before them, will be better qualified than the present General Conference can be to adjudicate the case wisely and discreetly. Until the cessation of the embarrassment, or the expiration of the interval between the present and the ensuing General Conference, the undersigned believe that such a division of the work of the general superintendency might be made, without any infraction of the constitutional principle, as would fully employ Bishop Andrew in those sections of the Church in which his presence and services would be welcome and cordial."

The next day, however, June 1st, Bishop Hedding withdrew his name from the paper. He said he thought that the proposition of the bishops would be adopted without debate; but he was now convinced that it would give rise to much discussion, and he had since learned facts which led him to believe that it would not be a peace measure.

It was already rumored that the conferences in the slaveholding states would be satisfied with nothing except division of the Church. For this they were prepared; but the northern conferences were solid for union, yet were unalterably opposed to allowing any of the bishops to be in any manner implicated with slavery. The proposition of the bishops was laid on the table by a vote of 95 yeas to 84 nays. It was then ordered that the vote be taken on Finley's substitute, and it resulted as follows: Yeas, 110; Nays, 68. So Bishop Andrew was virtually suspended from all episcopal functions so long as his connection with slavery should exist.

As soon as this vote was taken, the minority gave notice that a protest would be presented by them against it, at as early a day as possible, that it might be entered on the Journal of the Conference.

On Wednesday, June 5th, A. B. Longstreet, in behalf of the delegates from the southern and southwestern conferences, presented the following declaration:

"The delegates of the conferences in the slaveholding states take leave to declare to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that the continued agitation on the subject of slavery and abolition in a portion of the Church; the frequent action on that subject in the General Conference; and especially the extra-judicial proceedings against Bishop Andrew, which resulted on Saturday last in the virtual suspension of him from his office as superintendent, must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over these conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding states."

This declaration, on motion of Charles Elliott, was ordered to be referred to a committee of nine. The resolutions of the General Conference of 1840, with reference to the admission of testimony from colored persons in Church trials of white members were, on motion, rescinded.

The protest of the southern conferences was presented and read by Henry B. Bascom on Thursday morning, June 6th, and the bishop presiding decided that it should be entered on the journal. Immediately a resolution was offered by Matthew Simpson, that Stephen Olin, John P. Durbin, and L. L.

Hamline be a committee to prepare a statement of the facts connected with the proceedings in the case of Bishop Andrew, and that they have liberty to examine the protest just presented by the southern brethren. The resolution was adopted.

The committee of nine, heretofore ordered, to take into consideration the declaration of the southern delegates was appointed as follows: Robert Paine, Gleezen Fillmore, Peter Akers, Nathan Bangs, Thomas Crowder, Thomas B. Sargent, William Winans, Leonidas L. Hamline, and James Porter.

The Conference directed that the name of Bishop Andrew be retained in the Hymn Book, Discipline, Minutes, etc.; that he receive his support as usual; and that whether in any, and if any, in what work he be employed, be determined by his own decision and action, in relation to the previous action of the Conference in his case.

The Conference having resolved to elect two additional bishops, on Friday, June 7th, Leonidas Lent Hamline and Edmund Storer Janes were elected. One hundred and seventy-seven votes were cast, of which Mr. Hamline received 102 and Mr. Janes 99. Both were ordained to the episcopal office on Monday, June 10th.

George Lane and Charles B. Tippett were elected book agents at New York, and Leroy Swormstedt and John T. Mitchell in Cincinnati; George Peck, editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review;* Thomas E. Bond, editor, and George Coles, assistant editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal;* Charles Elliott, editor of the *Western Christian Advocate;* Edward Thomson of the *Ladies' Repository;* William Nast of the *Christliche Apologete;* Leroy M. Lee of the *Richmond Christian Advocate;* William M. Wightman of the *Southern;* John B. McFerrin of the *Southwestern;* William Hunter of the *Pittsburgh;* Nelson Rounds of the *Northern;* and Daniel P. Kidder of the *Sunday-school Advocate* and Sunday-school books. Charles Pitman was elected Missionary Secretary.

The report of the special committee of nine on the declaration of fifty-one delegates from the southern conferences was presented on Friday afternoon, June 7th, and laid on the table; but on the next day it was taken up and again read. The whole report was adopted, the several items being voted on separately.

The vote stood, on the average, 146 for and 16 against its adoption. This report is known as the "Plan of Separation," over which there has been so much controversy. It was under this plan that the southern conferences formed a separate ecclesiastical organization, known as the "Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

The committee appointed under the resolution offered by Matthew Simpson to answer the protest of the southern delegates, and to prepare a statement of the facts in the case of Bishop Andrew, presented their report on Monday, June 10th. Stephen Olin had been obliged to withdraw from the committee on account of illness, and L. L. Hamline was elected bishop after his appointment; accordingly their places were filled by the election of George Peck and Charles Elliott. The report was by a vote of 116 yeas to 26 nays ordered to be entered on the journal, and printed.

The general rule on Temperance was changed by a two-thirds vote, so as to read according to Mr. Wesley's original rule,—"Drunkenness; *buying or selling spirituous liquors;* or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity." This rule was changed in 1790 by dropping out the clause printed in *italics;* and though several attempts had been made to restore the original rule, they were hitherto unsuccessful. The bishops were instructed to bring the proposed change to the several annual conferences, so that, as soon as the necessary three-fourths majority in them should be secured, the amended rule might be inserted in the Discipline. It may be well to state here that the annual conferences almost unanimously voted for the change, and the new rule was adopted. It has remained unchanged ever since, so that the Church is, strictly speaking, a *total* abstinence organization—"touch not, taste not, handle not"—both for ministers and members. But it always was a temperance society, and the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage subjected the offending member to expulsion, as it does now.

It was ordered that a superintendent of missions to the colored population in the South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama conferences be appointed by the bishop presiding in those conferences. The cause of education was fostered, and

the subject of missions received special attention. The constitution of the Missionary Society was revised, and a more efficient and uniform plan of raising money for missionary purposes was adopted. The American Bible Society was commended to the Church, and various changes were made in the Discipline which George Peck, Nathan Bangs, and Thomas E. Bond were appointed to edit. The general rule and the section on slavery were left untouched.

Pittsburgh was selected as the place for holding the next General Conference, and a few minutes after midnight, on the morning of June 11th, the Conference adjourned.

1848.

IN 1848 the General Conference met in Pittsburgh. The sessions were held in the Liberty Street Church, and began May 1st. Bishops Hedding, Waugh, Morris, Hamline, and Janes were present as presiding officers. Bishops Soule and Andrew had adhered to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was organized at the Convention of the Southern Conferences at Louisville, Ky., May 1, 1845, and they were no longer recognized as bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The number of traveling preachers represented was 3,642; of local preachers, 4,913; and of members, 631,558—a loss of 979 traveling preachers, 3,174 local preachers, and 539,798 members, caused by the separation of the Southern Conferences.

After the preliminary religious exercises, conducted by Bishop Hedding, S. A. Roszel and Joseph M. Trimble were requested to act as secretaries, and assist in organizing the Conference. Twenty-three conferences were represented, and one hundred and thirty-four delegates furnished credentials and were recognized as members. Joseph M. Trimble was then elected permanent secretary, and Jesse T. Peck and John Frazer assistants.

Standing committees were ordered and appointed on Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, the Book Concern, Missions, Education, Temperance, Expenses of Delegates, Sunday-schools and Tracts, Bible Cause, and the State of the Church. Special committees were appointed as occasion required.

A committee was appointed to take into consideration the revision of the hymn book now in use, consisting of Charles Elliott, Matthew Simpson, William Hosmer, James Floy, David Patten, G. F. Brown, and Nelson Rounds. There were also committees appointed on Revisals, Finance, and the Arrangement of the Discipline.

At this Conference a daily Advocate, to publish the proceedings and debates, was for the first time undertaken. It was not authorized by the Conference; but before the session

was to begin the Publishing Committee of the *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate* and the editor, William Hunter, foreseeing that this would be an important session, decided to risk the publication. Prospectuses and circulars were sent out and widely scattered, asking for subscriptions, and as the number of subscribers was sufficient to justify the enterprise, the paper was commenced, and the first number issued at the opening of the Conference. It was entitled *The Pittsburgh Daily Christian Advocate*, and William Hunter was the editor. The precedent thus set has been followed ever since.

The credentials of M. Richey, J. Ryerson and Anson Green as representatives from the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada were presented by the presiding bishop, May 2d, and Dr. Green was introduced to the Conference, and invited to occupy a seat on the platform. The next morning, May 3d, James Dixon of the British Wesleyan Conference arrived as a fraternal delegate and was introduced to the Conference and invited to a seat. His credentials were read, and then on invitation he addressed the Conference. It was on motion

"*Resolved*, 1. That the cordial thanks of this body be presented to the Rev. Dr. Dixon, and through him to the Conference he represents, for the honor conferred on us in his presence and address, and that he be affectionately invited to take such part in our deliberations as may be agreeable to him.

"2. That the communication from the British Conference presented by him be referred to a select committee of three, with instructions to report the reply of the Conference."

Within the last quadrennium the Southern conferences at the convention held in Louisville which organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, appointed a General Conference to be held at Petersburg, Va., May, 1, 1846. Bishops Soule and Andrew were received as bishops of that Church. The General Conference was held, as determined upon, and appointed Lovick Pierce a delegate to bear the Christian salutations of the new organization to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was their desire to maintain a warm, confiding and brotherly relation with this body, and Mr. Pierce sent a communication to the bishops and members of the Conference, announcing his appointment, and his presence in Pitts-

burgh. His communication was referred to the committee on the State of the Church, which on May 5th reported the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That while we tender to the Rev. Dr. Pierce all personal courtesies and invite him to attend our sessions, this General Conference does not consider it proper at present to enter into fraternal relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

It was a question with the General Conference whether the separation of the Southern conferences was effected legitimately under the Plan of Separation, or whether it was a schism. Until this question was settled it was not thought advisable to recognize the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, fraternally, for this recognition would be an acknowledgment of their legitimacy.

The report of the committee was adopted, with the following proviso added: "Provided, however, that nothing in this resolution shall be so construed as to operate as a bar to any proposition from Dr. Pierce or any other representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, toward the settlement of existing difficulties between that body and this." The secretary was instructed to forward to Dr. Pierce an official copy of the action of this Conference in relation to his communication. But the Doctor refused to accept personal courtesies, and said that within the bar of the Conference he could be known only in his official character. He then added: "You will therefore regard this communication as final on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. She can never renew the offer of fraternal relations between the two great bodies of Wesleyan Methodists in the United States. But the proposition can be renewed at any time, either now or hereafter, by the Methodist Episcopal Church. And if ever made upon the basis of the Plan of Separation, as adopted by the General Conference of 1844, the Church, South, will cordially entertain the proposition."

Bishop Soule asked for an official examination of his character and administration between 1844 and 1846, in which latter year he formally and publicly announced his adhesion to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Conference

by resolution declined to take any action in the matter, on the ground that it had no jurisdiction over him, and could exercise no ecclesiastical authority with respect to him. The secretary was directed to furnish Bishop Soule a copy of the resolution.

James Dixon, the representative of the British Wesleyan Conference, was requested to address the Conference on certain points in the discipline and government of the Wesleyans in Great Britain, which he did to the great satisfaction of the Conference. He was also cordially requested to preach before the Conference on Wednesday morning, May 10th. His sermon was listened to with the greatest interest, and a copy of it was requested for publication.

Two commissioners from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, A. L. P. Green and C. B. Parsons, who accompanied Lovick Pierce, presented a communication in relation to the division of the property of the Book Concern. The communication was referred to the Committee on the State of the Church, which reported that it could not act advisedly on the subject of the communication until it should receive the official reports of all the conferences in relation to the change of the sixth restrictive rule, as recommended by the last General Conference. The committee also asked the attention of the Conference to the necessity of an order pointing out some plan of conference with the commissioners, either by appointing a special committee for this purpose, which should report the result of their deliberations to the General Conference, or by authorizing the present committee to invite them to a conference. The latter plan was adopted, and the committee was authorized to invite the commissioners to a conference with all the members thereof, or with a select number as a subcommittee.

All General Conference officers, and all traveling preachers were invited to seats in the house, and all General Conference officers were authorized to speak upon matters which concern their offices.

John P. Durbin, Charles Elliott and Charles Pitman were appointed a committee to respond to the address of the British Conference presented by Dr. Dixon. The address of the Wes-

leyan Methodist Conference in Canada was read, and on motion was referred to the same committee for a reply.

The bishops were requested to furnish the Committee on the State of the Church any facts within their knowledge in relation to alleged infractions of the division line between the Church, South, and our own. Several facts were furnished.

The Committee on the Revision of the Hymn Book reported that in their judgment a revision ought to be made, and that such revision should be intrusted to those who will make it with good taste and sound judgment; and they recommended that a committee be appointed to prepare a revised edition of the standard hymn book; that when the revision shall be made, the result shall be submitted to the editors and Book Committee in New York, and to the bishops; and that if approved by them, it shall be published simultaneously in New York and Cincinnati. The report was adopted, and a committee was appointed to nominate persons to whom the work of revision shall be intrusted. The following persons were nominated and elected: David Dailey, Philadelphia Conference; J. B. Alverson, Genesee; James Floy, New York; David Patton, Jr., Providence; Frederick Merrick, Ohio; Robert A. West, of Brooklyn, and David Creamer, of Baltimore.

The Committee on the State of the Church brought in a report which was discussed, and some amendments proposed, but which was finally adopted, as follows:

"1. There exists no power in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to pass any act which, either directly or indirectly, effectuates, authorizes, or sanctions a division of said Church.

"2. It is the right of every member of the Methodist Episcopal Church to remain in said Church, unless guilty of the violation of its rules; and there exists no power in the ministry, either individually or collectively, to deprive any member of said right.

"3. This right being inviolably secured by the fifth restrictive article of the Discipline, which guarantees to members, ministers, and preachers the right of trial and appeal, any acts of the Church otherwise separating them from said Church, contravene the constitutional rights and privileges of the membership and ministry.

"4. The report of the select committee of nine upon the declaration of the delegates in the slaveholding states, commonly called the Plan of Separation, adopted by the last General Conference, of

which the memorialists [whose memorials were referred to the committee] complain, and the operation of which separated them from connexion with the Methodist Episcopal Church, having been intended to secure peace and harmony in our southern boundary, and having been designed to be dependent upon the occurrence of a specified necessity, upon the concurrence of three-fourths of the members of the annual conferences, and upon the observance of a specified boundary by the distinct ecclesiastical connexion separating from us, should such connexion be formed;—and the said necessity in the opinion of this Conference not having arisen, the annual conferences having refused the necessary concurrence, and said provisions respecting a boundary having been infracted by the highest authorities of said connexion;—therefore, in view of these facts, as well as for the reasons before specified, there exists no obligation on the part of this Conference to observe the provisions of said Plan respecting a boundary, and said Plan is hereby declared null and void."

A further report from the same committee was presented on May 29th, and was adopted, to the effect that the Book Agents might submit the claims of the southern commissioners to arbitration, if eminent legal counsel shall decide that their corporate powers will so warrant; but if not, then they might tender to said commissioners an adjustment of their claims by a legal arbitration under the authority of the court; and if they find that they are not authorized to tender a voluntary arbitration, and suit should be commenced by the commissioners, the annual conferences shall be asked to suspend the sixth restrictive article of the Discipline, to authorize the Book Agents at New York and Cincinnati to submit said claim to arbitration. And the bishops were requested to lay these resolutions before the annual conferences for their concurrence.

The original rule of Mr. Wesley on Temperance having received in the annual conferences a vote of two thousand and eleven in favor, and only twenty-one against, it was by vote of the Conference restored to the General Rules, as follows: "Drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them unless in cases of extreme necessity."

The resolution of the General Conference of 1840, maintaining that slaveholding is no bar to offices or orders in the ministry and official membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was rescinded.

George Lane and Levi Scott were elected book agents in New York and Leroy Swormstedt and John H. Power in Cincinnati. The editors elected were: *Christian Advocate and Journal*, George Peck; *Western Christian Advocate*, Matthew Simpson; *Pittsburgh*, William Hunter; *Northern*, William Hosmer; *Apologete*, William Nast; *Ladies' Repository*, B. F. Tefft; *Quarterly Review*, John McClintock; and *Sunday School Advocate* and books, Daniel P. Kidder. Charles Pitman was elected Missionary Secretary.

Tobias Spicer, John McClintock, George Peck and Jesse T. Peck were appointed to edit the Discipline, with power to make any changes necessary to harmonize any discrepancies that may have escaped the action of the committees.

Bishop Hedding was requested to prepare his biography for publication, with his observations and opinions in relation to Methodism; and also to prepare and publish at our Book Concern his views on the pastorship of the Church in its various grades of class-leaders, preachers in charge, presiding elders and bishops.

It was, by resolution, deemed important that a history of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the last four years should be written by some competent person designated by this Conference; and Charles Elliott was requested to prepare it. [In accordance with this request, Dr. Elliott compiled and wrote his "History of the Great Secession."]

The Course of Studies for preachers prepared by the bishops was ordered to be printed as an appendix to the Discipline. The edition for 1848 is the first in which it appears.

The Committee on Correspondence reported their replies to the Address of the British Conference and to the Canada Conference, and they were adopted by the Conference and ordered to be officially authenticated and sent. The committee appointed to draft a "Pastoral Address to the Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church," also reported, and their report was adopted, to be signed by the bishops on behalf of the General Conference and published.

Boston was selected as the place for holding the next General Conference, and on Thursday, June 1st, the Conference adjourned.

1852.

THE General Conference of 1852 met in Boston. There were twenty-nine conferences represented, and one hundred and seventy-eight delegates were present. Bishop Hedding had died during the quadrennium, and Bishop Hamline on account of persistent ill health was not able to attend. The Conference was organized by the election of J. M. Trimble as secretary. Charles Adams, Benjamin Griffen and W. M. Daily were elected assistant secretaries.

The editors of the Church papers, who were members of the Conference, and the editor of *Zion's Herald* were appointed a committee to employ two reporters, and to superintend the official publication of the proceedings. The *Herald* was issued in a daily edition for this purpose, during the session of the Conference. Abel Stevens was the editor, and the paper was filled largely with sketches and notes concerning the leading characters of the Conference. Standing Committees were appointed on Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Missions, Boundaries, Book Concern, Revisals, Temporal Economy, German Work, Education, Sunday-schools and Tracts, Bible Cause, Expenses of Delegates, Church Suit (against the Book Concern), Temperance. A committee of five was also appointed to prepare a Pastoral Address in behalf of the General Conference to the membership of the Church.

Bishop Waugh read the Address of the Bishops to the General Conference, and the topics named therein were referred to appropriate committees. A special committee of five was appointed to make arrangements for a memorial service on occasion of the death of Bishop Hedding, which occurred on April 9, 1852, and prepare a suitable record to be entered on the journal of the Conference. The brethren at Baltimore having proposed to remove the remains of Bishops Asbury and Emory to the new Cemetery of Mount Olivet near that city, the Conference by vote signified its approval of the proposed reinterment, and directed the secretary so to notify them. The Committee on Arrangements for the Memorial Service reported that

it be held on Thursday afternoon, May 13th, and that Bishop Waugh be respectfully invited to preach a sermon on that occasion. The committee also reported an appropriate record to be entered on the journal, which was adopted.

The Rev. Anson Green, delegate of the Wesleyan Connexion in Canada was introduced to the Conference, and his credentials were read. The bishops presented a communication from Bishop Hamline, tendering his resignation of the episcopal office, which was read; and in connection with it, a letter from his physicians. His parchment of ordination was also presented. These papers were referred to the Committee on Episcopacy, which reported on May 11th. The report expressed sincere sympathy with the bishop, approved of his episcopal administration, and resolved, "That the resignation of Bishop Hamline of his office as a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, be, and the same hereby is, accepted." The report was adopted; and it was further, on motion of J. A. Collins,

"*Resolved*, That the bishops be, and hereby are, respectfully requested to convey to Bishop Hamline, the acceptance of his resignation as a superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by the General Conference, accompanied with a communication expressing the profound regret of this body, that the condition of his health has, in his judgment, rendered it proper for him to relinquish his official position; assuring him also of our continued confidence and affection, and that our fervent prayers will be offered to the throne of grace that his health may be restored, and his life prolonged to the Church."

An interesting and important appeal case was heard, that of John S. Inskip, of the Ohio Conference, who had been censured by his conference for violation of discipline and contumacy. While pastor of the newly erected High Street Church in Springfield, Ohio, Mr. Inskip introduced family sittings in the pews, and allowed men and women to sit together. The old rule of the Discipline, in force from the beginnings of Methodist history, was that they should sit apart in all cases, no exception being allowed. The advanced civilization of the age and the conveniences of Church life were put to shame by the enforcement of the rule, and Mr. Inskip allowed and encouraged it

to be broken. On the trial of his appeal, the action of the Ohio Conference was reversed. The effect of this reversal was the rescinding of the rule—thus leaving it optional with individual Churches to allow promiscuous sittings, or to separate the sexes. By degrees all Churches in Methodism adopted free, promiscuous sittings; nor has the change wrought any damage to the spiritual, social or material prosperity of the several charges.

The Mayor of Boston and other citizens having invited the General Conference as a body to unite in an excursion among the islands of the harbor, and to listen to an address by Daniel Webster in Fanueil Hall, the Conference accepted the invitation, and appointed a committee of three to send the proper response thereto. N. Bishop, Superintendent of the Public Schools, and Barnas Sears, of the Board of Education, also extended invitations to visit the schools, and the school office in the State House. This excursion was made on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 18th, and the thanks of the Conference were, by resolution, ordered to be returned to the mayor and the city authorities of Boston for their courtesies.

Depositories for the sale of books were ordered to be established by the Book Agents at San Francisco, Auburn, Buffalo, St. Louis and Chicago; and, at the discretion of the agents, at Washington, D. C. The agents were instructed to establish a weekly official paper at San Francisco; and the Conference resolved to accept as such paper the one entitled *The California Christian Advocate,* already begun as a private enterprise. New papers were also ordered to be established at Chicago and at St. Louis, the former to be styled "The North-western Christian Advocate." The paper and depository in San Francisco, and the depositories at Auburn and Buffalo were placed under the charge of the agents in New York, the others under that of the Book Agents in Cincinnati.

The matter of the election of a missionary bishop, or an ordaining superintendent, for our several foreign missions, by inserting the necessary proviso in the Restrictive rule on the subject of the Episcopacy, was discussed, but finally laid on the table. It was resolved to strengthen the episcopacy by electing four additional bishops, and the election was held on Tuesday, May 25th. On the first ballot, Levi Scott, Matthew Simp-

son, Osmon Cleander Baker and Edward Raymond Ames were elected. Their ordination to office took place on May 27th.

The General Conference officials for the quadrennium were elected as follows: Book Agents in New York, Thomas Carlton and Zebulon Phillips; Book Agents in Cincinnati, Leroy Swormstedt and Adam Poe. Editors: *Quarterly Review*, John McClintock; *Christian Advocate and Journal*, Thomas E. Bond; *Ladies' Repository*, William C. Larrabee; *Western Christian Advocate*, Charles Elliott; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast; *Northern Christian Advocate*, William Hosmer; *North-western Christian Advocate*, James V. Watson; *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate*, Homer J. Clark; *California Christian Advocate*, S. D. Simonds; *Sunday-school Advocate* and Books, Daniel P. Kidder. John P. Durbin was elected Missionary Secretary.

The General Conference directed the Book Agents in New York to establish a monthly magazine for popular reading in our Church circles, and Abel Stevens was elected editor. The magazine thus ordered was begun in January, 1853, and was entitled "The National Magazine."

It was deemed inexpedient to send a delegate to the British Conference, but George Gary was appointed a representative to visit the Canada Conference sometime during the next four years. A committee of five, John McClintock, George Peck, Alfred Griffith, G. Webber and Lucien W. Berry, were appointed to draft a fraternal letter to the Wesleyan Conference in England.

The appeals of Ezra Sprague, of the Troy Conference; J. M. Pease, of New York; J. N. McAbee, of Pittsburgh; G. Taylor, of Michigan; D. J. Snow, of Illinois; and N. R. Peck, of Black River, were heard. The actions of the conferences in the case of Sprague, affirmed; Pease, reversed; McAbee, remanded for new trial; Taylor, affirmed; D. J. Snow, reversed; and N. R. Peck affirmed.

The Agents of the Book Concern in New York were instructed to publish all the Journals of the General Conference from the beginning, up to and including 1836. Those subsequent to that date had already been printed.

The enterprise of erecting a Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington City was sanctioned, and com-

mended to the Church at large. On an appeal of sundry preachers of the North Ohio Conference, it was decided that the censure of any member of the conference for uniting with a secret society is not authorized by the Discipline, unless such society is known to be opposed to or at variance with the rules and order of the Church.

Suit having been brought by commissioners appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, against the Agents of the Methodist Book Concern in New York, for a division of the property belonging to it, Judge Nelson of the United States Circuit Court in New York decided in favor of the plaintiffs. It was a question whether the defendants should appeal to the Supreme Court in bank, or settle the case by arbitration. The General Conference of 1848 submitted this question to the annual conferences, and the vote for concurrence, previous to the commencement of the suit, in twelve conferences that voted, was 727 for and 413 against arbitration. The present General Conference did not rescind the former action, and left it still standing. It may be well to state here that a like suit against the Agents of the Western Methodist Book Concern was decided by Judge Humphrey H. Leavitt of the United States Circuit Court in Ohio in favor of the defendants. John S. Porter and Michael Marlay were elected commissioners to act with the Agents in New York and Cincinnati in settling this Church suit.

The conference boundaries were adjusted, and several new conferences were formed—the Wyoming, Cincinnati, Southeast Indiana, Northwest Indiana, Southern Illinois, California, Arkansas, and North Indiana—making a total of thirty-nine. The German work was distributed among five annual conferences, and Liberia continued as a mission conference.

Various new measures were proposed which were not adopted, among them the admission of lay delegates in the General and Annual Conferences. Sundry changes were made in the Discipline without affecting its integrity, and the editors and agents in New York were appointed by the Conference to edit it. Indianapolis was selected as the place for holding the General Conference of 1856, and on June 1st, the Conference adjourned.

1856.

THE General Conference this year assembled in Indianapolis. There were thirty-eight conferences represented, and two hundred and six delegates were present at the opening session. Other delegates came in later. The whole number entitled to seats was two hundred and seventeen. William L. Harris was elected secretary, and Benjamin Griffen, John S. Martin, Jefferson Lewis, and James Hill assistant secretaries, Samuel D. Simonds not serving.

The Western Book Agents having undertaken the issue of a daily Conference journal entitled the *Daily Western Christian Advocate*, the Conference on motion approved the proposed publication, and directed that one copy should be furnished to each delegate gratuitously. The editor was Charles Elliott, and William P. Strickland was engaged as reporter.

The usual standing committees were appointed, and special committees on Temperance, Bible Cause, Temporal Economy, Expenses of Delegates, Pastoral Address, Colored Members, and on other matters as occasion required.

The sessions of the Conference were held in the State Capitol by courtesy of the legislature; and the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House of Representatives were invited to occupy seats within the bar of the Conference. The editors of *Zion's Herald* and the official Church papers were appointed a committee on printing, and were instructed to publish in pamphlet form for the use of the members the rules of order as adopted, together with the standing and other principal committees, the names of the delegates, and if possible their boarding-places.

John Hannah and Frederick J. Jobson, representatives from the British Conference, were introduced, and after the reading of the Address from that Conference, both delivered addresses. They were invited to occupy seats on the platform, and to express their opinions or give their counsel on any question which might be under discussion, at their discretion.

The Address of the bishops was read by Bishop Janes, and the subjects spoken of in it referred to the appropriate committees. One thousand copies of the address were ordered to be printed in pamphlet form, and delivered at the secretary's table, to be by him distributed among the delegations *pro rata*.

The editors of our Church periodicals and Book Agents, not members of the Conference, and representatives of the American Bible Society were invited to occupy seats within the bar of the Conference.

John Ryerson and Richard Jones, representatives of the Wesleyan Conference in Canada, were introduced to the Conference, and Dr. Ryerson presented the Address of the Canada Conference to this body, which was read; after which both himself and Mr. Jones addressed the Conference in relation to the interests of Methodism in Canada.

Robinson Scott and Dr. —— Cather, of the Irish Wesleyan Conference, were introduced. Dr. Scott presented an address from his Conference which was read; after which the two visiting brethren addressed the Conference, and a cordial greeting was extended to them and to William Arthur, not present, and the connectional interests of Irish Methodism commended to the Church. Committees were appointed to respond to the several addresses sent by the British, Canadian, and Irish Conferences; and at the request of Dr. Hannah it was resolved by the General Conference that two representatives be sent to the British Conference of 1857, to bear the fraternal greetings of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Matthew Simpson and John McClintock were elected.

A communication was received from the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and a committee of five was appointed to prepare an answer to it. At the request of the Conference the two visiting brethren from England preached sermons before the Conference, Dr. Hannah in the afternoon and F. J. Jobson at night, May 14th, and their sermons were requested for publication and ordered to be printed by the Agents of the Western Methodist Book Concern.

John P. Durbin presented an address from the French Methodist Conference in France and Switzerland, which was read and referred to the Committee on Missions for reply.

It was voted "that it is inexpedient at this time to extend the term of ministerial service beyond the present assigned limit of two years."

The Conference by resolution expressed their cordial and undiminished confidence in the American Bible Society, and approved of the intention and effort of the Board of Managers to secure a systematic and thorough canvass and resupply of the whole country; and recommended to all our ministers to preach at least once a year on the Bible cause. Joseph Holdich, one of the financial secretaries of the Bible Society, being present, was invited to address the Conference on this subject, which he did, urging the claims of the society upon the ministry and membership of the Church.

On the petition of Ludwig S. Jacoby and other brethren in Germany, the German missionaries in that country, and in that part of France and Switzerland where the German language is spoken, were organized into a mission annual conference, and the bishops were requested to depute one of their number to hold the mission conference in Germany when it may be deemed necessary by them.

The growing sentiment of the northern states against slavery and the aggressive spirit of the southern slaveholding states in their endeavor to introduce and perpetuate the peculiar institution in the territories of the Union, brought the question of slavery in the Church prominently before the General Conference. Many of the members were in favor of excluding from the Church all who were implicated with slavery, whether by purchase or gift, or inheritance, while others were willing to allow private persons to hold slaves in the states where law and custom sanctioned it. The discussion of this subject occupied several days. The report of the Committee on Slavery was presented on May 21st by Miner Raymond, proposing a change in the General Rule of the Discipline on the subject, forbidding slaveholding; but as this required a vote of two-thirds to effect it, that part of the report was not adopted. The remainder of the report was laid on the table. On May 22d, John A. Collins of the same committee presented a minority report. Both the majority and minority reports were ordered to be printed in pamphlet form, in an edition of five thousand

copies, for the use of the Conference, and for general distribution. A substitute for the report was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed. But these reports were not again acted on; so the rule on slavery was left unchanged, and the Chapter on Slavery was modified by omitting the paragraphs allowing presiding elders to hold quarterly conferences for colored preachers, and authorizing the bishops to employ colored preachers where their exclusive services are judged necessary. These provisions are inserted, however, elsewhere in the Discipline for 1856.

The Book Agents were directed to sell to local preachers, for their own use, books and periodicals at the same discount that they allow to traveling preachers.

The secretary of the Conference was authorized to edit the Journal of its proceedings, and to supervise its publication by the Book Concern at New York, and the agents were directed to remunerate him suitably for this service.

The election for General Conference officers resulted as follows: Book Agents, in New York, Thomas Carlton and James Porter; in Cincinnati, Leroy Swormstedt and Adam Poe; Editors, *Christian Advocate and Journal*, Abel Stevens; *Western Christian Advocate*, Calvin Kingsley; *Northern*, F. G. Hibbard; *Pittsburgh*, Isaac N. Baird; *Northwestern*, James V. Watson; *National Magazine* and Tracts, James Floy; *Quarterly Review*, Daniel D. Whedon; *Ladies' Repository*, Davis W. Clark; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast; *Sunday-school Advocate* and Books, Daniel Wise; and Secretary of the Missionary Society, John P. Durbin.

The Book Agents were instructed to publish a weekly paper in San Francisco, and in case a transfer of the *California Christian Advocate* now published in that city can be obtained on reasonable terms, they were authorized to adopt that paper.

The Book Agents were directed to establish papers at St. Louis and in Oregon, and to adopt those already printed for the Church as private enterprises, under the titles of the *Central Christian Advocate* and the *Pacific Christian Advocate*. For the former of these Joseph Brooks was elected editor, and for the latter Thomas H. Pearne. For the *California Christian Advocate*, Eleazer Thomas was elected editor.

The Committee on Episcopacy reported that it was inexpedient to recommend any addition to the number of bishops. The Committee on Lay Delegation reported that any change in our economy relating to the constitution of the Annual and General Conferences is inexpedient at the present time.

The Conference confirmed the election of Colson Hieskell and T. K. Collins as trustees of the Chartered Fund, and returned a vote of thanks to the trustees for the wisdom and faithfulness with which they have discharged their duty.

The Constitution of the Missionary Society was revised, and provision was made for a missionary bishop, to reside in the particular mission field assigned to him, his episcopal functions being limited to that field. As this action required a change in the Third Restrictive Rule, the matter was ordered to be referred for their sanction to the several annual conferences. In the expectation that the annual conferences would vote for this change, the Liberia conference was authorized to select some suitable member of that conference, to be presented for ordination as missionary bishop in this country during the interim of the General Conferences. This alteration in the restrictive rule being sanctioned by the annual conferences, in the year 1858, Francis Burns, a member of the Liberia conference elected by that conference, was ordained a missionary bishop for Liberia. This change of the restrictive rule was not included in the Discipline until 1868.

The Committee on Expenses of Delegates reported a deficiency of $3,451.10 in the collections, which was ordered to be paid out of the funds of the Book Concern. Replies to the addresses of the British, Canadian, Irish, and French Conferences, and to the Congregational Union of England and Wales, were read and adopted.

Appeals from the action of annual conferences were heard and disposed of as follows: Eli Denniston, New York, reversed; L. D. Harlan, Cincinnati, affirmed; D. J. Snow, Illinois, remanded; I. N. McAbee, Pittsburgh, reversed; J. M. Snow, Wisconsin, remanded; Oliver Burgess, North Ohio, dismissed; John Demming, Erie, dismissed; Nehemiah Stokely, New Jersey, reversed. Much time had always been consumed in both the General and the annual conferences in the hearing of ap-

peals. The bishops had heretofore suggested some plan by which this could be remedied, but no action had been taken. This year, however, the General Conference adopted the following paragraph, which is embodied in the Discipline:

"The General Conference may try appeals from members of an annual conference who may have been censured, suspended, expelled, or located without their consent, by a committee embracing not less than fifteen of its members, nor more than one member from each delegation, who, in the presence of a bishop presiding, and one or more of the secretaries of the Conference keeping a faithful record of all the proceedings had, shall have full power to hear and determine the case, subject to the rules and regulations which govern the said Conference in such proceedings; and the records made and the papers submitted in such trials shall be presented to the Conference, and be filed and preserved with the papers of that body."

Sundry changes were made in the Discipline. Baptized children were to be placed under special guardianship by the Church; Bible Society agents were recognized as in the regular work of the ministry, and might be appointed to this service for more than two years; the widows and orphans of deceased bishops authorized to draw their allowance from the Book Concern the same as the bishops; the rules respecting band-societies eliminated; preachers might remain in a city more than four years, though not in the same charge; college appointments were recognized as part of the regular work of a preacher; the ratio of representation in the General Conference fixed at the limit of one delegate for every forty-five members of an annual conference (to be referred to the annual conferences, as being a change in the second Restrictive Rule); the section on Dress changed, by omitting specifications and exhorting the people to conform to the spirit of the Apostolic precept; the education of colored youth commended to public favor; and tracts on slavery to be printed by the Tract Society.

Buffalo was selected as the place for holding the next General Conference. William L. Harris was appointed to edit the new edition of the Discipline, and the Conference adjourned a few minutes after midnight of June 3d.

1860.

THE General Conference met this year in St. James Hall in the city of Buffalo. Bishops Morris, Janes, Scott, Baker, and Ames were present at the opening session. Bishop Simpson came in the next morning, having been detained by sickness in his family. Two hundred and six delegates presented their certificates of election and were admitted to seats. A few delegates came in later, the whole number entitled to membership in the Conference being two hundred and twenty-one. William L. Harris was elected secretary, and Benjamin Griffen, William Cox, Edward Cooke, Asahel N. Fillmore, and Jonathan T. Crane were chosen assistant secretaries.

Standing committees, to consist of one member from each of the annual conferences, to be appointed by the several delegations, were ordered as follows: On Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, Slavery, Book Concern, Missions, Education, Lay Delegation, Sunday-schools, Revisals, and Tract Cause. Special committees were also ordered, on Rules of Order, Expenses of Delegates, Bible Cause, Temperance, Temporal Economy, Pastoral Address, New Arrangement of the Discipline, Divorce and Marriage, Correspondence with Sister Churches, Christian Union, Centenary of American Methodism, Colored Membership, and other matters, as occasion arose.

During the preceding quadrennium, Bishop Waugh had gone to his eternal reward. He died February 9, 1858. In their episcopal address to the Conference, the bishops mention the death of their late colleague, and give the names of twelve members of the last General Conference who had also died in the Lord. On motion of John S. Porter it was resolved that the bishops be respectfully requested to select one of their number to preach a memorial discourse, during the session of the Conference, and also to prepare an obituary notice of Bishop Waugh, the latter to be entered on the journal of the Conference. In accordance with this resolution, Bishop Morris delivered the funeral sermon on Friday, May 11th, and the bishops prepared the obituary notice, which is inserted in the journal for May 15th.

Bishop Morris was requested to furnish his sermon for publication.

Committees to try appeals were appointed, consisting of fifteen members each, over whom one of the bishops was to preside. By these committees the following appeal cases were determined: A. Wright, of North Ohio, reversed; G. C. Creevey, of New York East, reversed; W. H. Sheets, of South East Indiana, remanded; G. C. Holmes, of Rock River, reversed; C. W. Batchellor, of Rock River, remanded; O. F. Morse, of Wyoming, remanded; J. W. Wood, of Wisconsin, affirmed; A. S. Wightman, of Black River, affirmed, and P. H. Smith, of Troy, remanded.

A committee of seven, consisting of D. W. Clark, Joseph Holdich, Francis Hodgson, F. G. Hibbard, John T. Mitchell, L. D. Barrows and Edward Cooke were appointed to consider and report on the amendment of our Rituals which were proposed by the Committee on Revision of Rituals appointed by the General Conference at its last session,—these amendments being now in their hands. When the committee made their report, it was on motion of Henry Slicer recommitted to the committee, with instruction to report at an early day to the next General Conference; and on motion of A. M. Osbon, the agents of the Book Concern in New York were directed to forward to each member of the present and the succeeding General Conference a printed copy of the Revised Ritual. The revisions consisted chiefly in the introduction of forms for the laying of corner-stones of churches, dedicating houses of worship and the reception of probationers into full membership. A few verbal changes were suggested in the rituals for ordination and the administration of the sacraments.

The Committee on Temporal Economy was instructed to inquire into the expediency of so changing the Discipline that the bishops should be supported by direct contributions of our people, as are the other ministers in the regular work. The committee, after carefully considering the matter, deemed it, for the present at least, impracticable, and reported that the bishops should receive their support from the funds of the Book Concern, and were therefore authorized to draw upon the Book Agents for the amounts allowed them, and also for

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their necessary traveling expenses. But the motion to instruct the committee to inquire into the subject led to a thoughtful examination of the method of supporting the bishops, so that a subsequent General Conference, when it took up this matter anew, was better prepared to adopt new methods and commend them to the Church at large. The whole subject of the support of the ministry received careful attention from the committee, and they reported a chapter and section which were adopted, and embodied in the Discipline as a substitute for much that had heretofore been in it.

The subject of lay delegation was brought before the Conference, but there was no general desire expressed on the part of the laity, in the form of petitions or memorials; but the Conference still seemed willing to heed the wishes of the Church, and it was resolved that the members of the General Conference approved of lay representation in that body, and directed the preachers in charge throughout the United States and the territories to lay the matter of lay representation before their congregations and to take the vote of the male members above the age of twenty-one years in full connection, upon this point. The form and manner of taking this vote was to be by ballot, with printed or written tickets, containing only the words, "For Lay Representation" and "Against Lay Representation." The vote was to be taken at any convenient time between the sessions of the annual conferences of 1861 and 1862; and a vote of all the preachers on the same subject was ordered to be taken at their conference sessions in 1862. The preachers were to report the result of the lay vote in their several charges in 1862; and they were also requested to present the summary of the several votes, both clerical and lay, to the General Conference at its next session in 1864.

The Book Agents in New York were authorized to establish as early as possible a depository of Methodist books and tracts in San Francisco, and to purchase a lot on which to erect suitable buildings for this purpose. The action of the agents in discontinuing the publication of the *National Magazine* at the end of the thirteenth annual volume, was approved. The number of paying subscribers continued to decrease, and the losses overbalanced the gains. The New York agents were

directed to secure an act of incorporation from the state, under the style of "The Methodist Book Concern," or some similar appropriate designation.

The Committee on the Arrangement of the Discipline reported that they had examined the new order of placing the various subjects therein treated of, by A. M. Osbon of the New York Conference, and recommended that this order, with some revisions made by the committee, be observed in printing the next edition. The report was adopted, and on motion, Dr. Osbon was appointed to act in conjunction with the editor in New York in preparing it.

The vote in the annual conferences on changing the ratio of representation in the General Conference from one for every thirty preachers to one for every forty-five not having been reported, it was resolved that the ratio for the next General Conference be fixed at one for every thirty. The bishops were requested to make a report of the vote, when ascertained, to the editor of the Discipline, so that the alteration of the ratio, if authorized by the several conferences, might be published in the next edition of the Discipline issued subsequently.

The subject of slavery was debated at length by the members of the Conference, and various resolutions and amendments were offered after the report of the Committee on Slavery was presented. The change proposed by the committee in the General Rule on slavery, so that it should read, "The buying, selling or holding of men, women or children with an intention to enslave them," was lost, two-thirds not voting for it—138 for and 74 against. The chapter on slavery in the Discipline was, by resolution, changed so as to read as follows:

"We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery. We believe that the buying, selling, or holding of human beings as chattels is contrary to the laws of God and nature, inconsistent with the Golden Rule, and with that rule in our Discipline which requires all who desire to remain among us to 'do no harm and to avoid evil of every kind.' We therefore affectionately admonish all our preachers and people to keep themselves pure from this great evil, and to seek its extirpation by all lawful and Christian means."

The vote on the resolution to make this change was 155 for and 58 against;—7 being absent or not voting.

The Mission Board was authorized to establish a theological institute in Germany, and the bishops were instructed to visit the missions in that country. They were also authorized to form a mission conference in India.

The Book Agents were authorized to issue a journal for teachers in our Sunday-schools, and to publish graduated lesson books for classes.

Arrangements were made for the celebration of the centenary of Methodism in America in 1866, and a Committee of Correspondence was appointed on the matter. A committee from among the German delegates was appointed to compile and edit a collection of hymns for the use of German-speaking members of the Church in this and in other countries.

A number of changes were made in the Discipline by the Committee on Revisals, and adopted by the Conference—some of them being of importance. The number of annual conferences was increased from forty-seven to fifty-one, these including eleven German districts. Nathan Bangs, F. G. Hibbard and Francis Hodgson were appointed delegates to the Canadian Wesleyan Conference; and Gardner Baker and Francis A. Blades to the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada.

The elections in the General Conference resulted as follows: Book Agents in New York, Thomas Carlton, James Porter; in Cincinnati, Adam Poe, Luke Hitchcock. Missionary Secretary, John P. Durbin; Assistant Missionary Secretary, W. L. Harris. Editors: *Methodist Quarterly Review*, Daniel D. Whedon; *Ladies' Repository*, Davis W. Clark; *Christian Advocate and Journal*, Edward Thomson; *Western Christian Advocate*, Calvin Kingsley; *Northern*, Isaac S. Bingham; *Pittsburgh*, Samuel H. Nesbit; *Northwestern*, Thomas M. Eddy; *Central*, Charles Elliott; *California*, Eleazer Thomas; *Pacific*, Thomas H. Pearne; *Sunday-school Advocate* and books, Daniel Wise; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast.

William L. Harris was appointed editor of the General Conference Journal, and directed to prepare the copy for printing as soon as practicable. He was also made editor of the Discipline in company with A. M. Osbon and D. D. Whedon.

The Conference adjourned (without a legal quorum of two-thirds of the members) on June 2d.

1864.

THE Conference met in Union Church, Philadelphia, on Monday morning, May 2d. Forty-nine conferences were represented, and at the opening exercises one hundred and eighty-nine delegates were present out of two hundred and sixteen. William L. Harris was elected secretary and George W. Woodruff, Henry Brownscombe, Kasimir P. Jervis, James Hill and Richard W. Keeler were appointed assistant secretaries. Standing committees consisting of one delegate from each conference were ordered and appointed on Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, Book Concern, Slavery, Missions, Education, Lay Delegation, Sunday-schools and Tract Cause, Revisals, German Work, and the State of the Country. The Committee of Appeals was also classed among the Standing Committees.

Special Committees on the Christian Commission, including the Sanitary Commission, of fifteen members, and on the Bible Cause, Temperance, Temporal Economy, Pastoral Address, Expenses of Delegates, and Freedmen, of seven members each, were ordered and appointed.

Rules of order were adopted, and fast-day services were ordered to be held on Friday, May 6th, which was set apart expressly for this purpose. Granville Moody, D. W. Bartine and S. Y. Monroe were appointed to arrange for these services. No session of the Conference was held on that day, and it was observed as a season of fasting and prayer to Almighty God in behalf of the country in all our Churches in the city, morning, afternoon and evening. It was recommended that our people generally throughout the country observe similar services on that day in their several places of worship. The arrangements made by the committee for this purpose were carried out.

The Episcopal Address was read by Bishop Scott, and the various topics therein referred to distributed among the appropriate committees. The address was ordered to be printed in pamphlet form, and distributed *pro rata* among the delegates.

W. L. Thornton, delegate from the British Conference, and

Robinson Scott, delegate from the Irish Conference, were introduced on Tuesday, May 3d, and presented addresses from their several conferences, and Dr. Thornton addressed the Conference. A committee of five was appointed to prepare a reply to the address of the British Conference, to wit, Edward Thomson, Charles Elliott, Joseph Cummings, John M. Reid and Isaac N. Baird. On May 4th, Dr. Robinson Scott addressed the Conference, and the address of the Irish Conference was referred to the same committee to which the address of the British Conference was referred, to draft a reply. Both these visiting brethren were heartily welcomed, and their addresses were listened to with deep interest.

The agents of the Book Concern were directed to furnish to each of the bishops, the delegates from foreign bodies, the members of the Conference, and the Conference reporters one copy of the Daily Advocate, gratuitously.

A committee of seven on the Centenary of American Methodism was appointed, consisting of David Patten, John P. Durbin, Thomas Carlton, Adam Poe, Joseph M. Trimble, Jesse T. Peck, and Joseph B. Wakeley. A committee of seven was also appointed to report a plan of trusteeship in behalf of General Conference, to represent the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and by virtue of their corporate powers secure and hold all bequests made to the Church for benevolent purposes. The committee were William Young, Elijah H. Pilcher, Albert Church, Williamson Terrell, James Lawson, John Miley and Kasimir P. Jervis. The plan reported by them was adopted, and included in the Discipline for 1864.

There being only two members of the Committee on the Revision of the Ritual appointed by the last General Conference in the present Conference, viz., Davis W. Clark and F. G. Hibbard, it was resolved that the committee be increased by the addition of five to the original number, and that when so enlarged they give opportunity for the reception of such suggestions as may be made by members of this body. The entire committee thus appointed were Davis W. Clark, F. G. Hibbard, Bostwick Hawley, Wm. A. Davidson, Charles F. Allen, Daniel W. Bristol and George L. Mulfinger.

A committee of five was appointed to proceed to Washington and present to the President of the United States, in a suitable address, the assurances of our Church that we are with him heart and soul in the present struggle for human rights and free institutions. The committee consisted of Bishop E. R. Ames, Joseph Cummings, George Peck, Charles Elliott and Granville Moody. In accordance with this resolution, the committee proceeded to Washington, and presented the address prepared by the Committee on the State of the Country and adopted by the General Conference. The President made a brief reply, which was reported to the Conference, as follows:

"GENTLEMEN,—In response to your address, allow me to attest the accuracy of its historical statements, indorse the sentiments it expresses, and thank you, in the Nation's name, for the sure promise it gives. Nobly sustained, as the Government has been by all the Churches, I would utter nothing which might in the least appear invidious against any. Yet, without this, it may fairly be said that the Methodist Episcopal Church, not less devoted than the best, is by its greater numbers, the most important of all. It is no fault in others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to heaven than any. God bless the Methodist Church, bless all the Churches, and blessed be God who, in this great trial, giveth us the Churches!"

The Conference advised that our foreign missions in Europe and elsewhere be organized into Mission Annual Conferences, and resolved to organize at once the missions in India into a mission conference, giving these mission conferences all the rights, powers and privileges of other annual conferences, except that of sending delegates to the General Conference, of voting on constitutional changes in the Discipline, and drawing dividends from the Book Concern and Chartered Fund. The bishops were authorized to organize any other of our foreign missions into mission conferences, subject to the foregoing limitations, when in their judgment it is desirable and practicable. And the Committee on Boundaries was instructed to provide for the organization of a mission conference in India.

The pastoral term was extended from two to three years. Numerous other suggestions for the revision and amendment of

the Discipline were referred to the Committee on Revisals. The Committee on Revisal of the Ritual made five reports, covering the entire ritual, and adding forms for the reception of members into the Church after probation, for laying the corner-stone of a church, and for the dedication of a church. The forms thus reported were, with some slight amendments, adopted, and were embodied in the Discipline prepared for publication after the adjournment of the Conference. The revised ritual has continued in use ever since. The term "consecrate" is used instead of "ordain," in the form of inducting a bishop into office.

A plan for observing the Centenary of American Methodism in 1866 was adopted. It was resolved that it be celebrated by all our Churches and people with devout thanksgiving, by special religious services and liberal thank-offering, commencing on the first Tuesday in October and continuing through the month at such times and places as might best suit the convenience of the societies. Two departments of Christian enterprise were to be set before the Methodist public, one connectional, central and monumental, the other local and distributive. A committee of twelve traveling preachers and twelve laymen were to determine the special objects of these contributions, and the amounts to be raised for each. It was provided that a memorial sermon be delivered in each of the annual conferences at its session next preceding the centennial celebration, and they were to appoint an equal number of preachers and laymen to give advice and direction for the appropriate celebration of the centennial in our principal Churches.

The Conference expressed its approval of lay representation in that body whenever it shall be ascertained that the Church desires it, and declared itself ready at all times to receive petitions and memorials from the members on that subject, and to consider them most respectfully.

The Conference increased the number of the annual conferences from fifty-one to fifty-nine, making two conferences for colored preachers and three for German-speaking preachers exclusively. It changed the Boundary lines of some of the conferences, adding two in the West, the Colorado and Nevada, and the India Mission Conference.

A committee of seven, consisting of Edwin E. Griswold, Alpha J. Kynett, Samuel C. Thomas, Miner Raymond, Barzillai N. Spahr, David L. Dempsey and Reuben Nelson, was appointed on the subject of Church Extension. The report of the committee, embodying a plan and form of constitution for "The Church Extension Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church," was adopted. Bishop Simpson, Joseph Castle and David W. Bartine were appointed a committee to appoint officers for the Society, and also a Board of Managers for the same. The seat of the Society was fixed at Philadelphia, and the bishops were to appoint a Corresponding Secretary, as soon as the Board of Managers should become incorporated.

William Nast, Isaac N. Baird and Moses Hill were appointed delegates to visit the Evangelical Association; Bishop E. S. Janes and Thomas Bowman delegates to the Wesleyan Conference of Great Britain; George Weber and Mighill Dustin to the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada; and Charles Elliott, George Peck and William Nast to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada.

Replies were adopted to the addresses of the Irish and British Conferences, the Methodist Episcopal and Wesleyan Methodist Churches in Canada, and to the National Local Preachers' Association, which had presented a memorial.

The venerable Bishop Morris having in April, 1864, completed fifty years of ministerial labor, was requested to preach a semi-centennial sermon before the Conference, which he did; after which the thanks of the Conference were returned to him for his discourse, and he was requested to furnish a copy for publication. His theme was "The Spirit of Methodism," and in accordance with this request, the sermon was published in pamphlet form by the Book Agents in New York.

The growing work of the Church and the extension of its borders, besides the failing strength of the senior bishop made it necessary to strengthen the episcopacy, and it was resolved to elect three additional bishops. The election took place on Friday, May 20th, and on counting the votes, it appeared that the whole number was 216; necessary to a choice 109. On the first ballot, Davis W. Clark received 124 votes, and Edward Thomson, 123, and were declared elected. On the third ballot,

Calvin Kingsley received 114, and was declared duly elected. The new bishops were ordained to the episcopal office on Tuesday afternoon, May 24th.

The other officers of the General Conference were elected as follows: Book Agents, New York, Thomas Carlton, James Porter; Book Agents, Cincinnati, Adam Poe, Luke Hitchcock. Missionary Secretary, John P. Durbin; 1st Assistant Secretary, Wm. L. Harris; 2d Assistant Secretary, Joseph M. Trimble. Editors: *Methodist Quarterly Review,* Daniel D. Whedon; *Christian Advocate,* Daniel Curry; *Christliche Apologete* and German Books, William Nast; *Western Christian Advocate,* John M. Reid; *Northwestern Christian Advocate,* Thomas M. Eddy; *Central Christian Advocate,* Benjamin F. Crary; *Northern Christian Advocate,* Dallas D. Lore; *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate,* Samuel H. Nesbit; *California Christian Advocate,* Eleazer Thomas; *Pacific Christian Advocate,* Henry C. Benson; *Ladies' Repository,* Isaac W. Wiley; Sunday-school Books and Papers, Daniel Wise.

The Committee on the German Work reported, recommending the formation of conferences for members and preachers speaking the German language, which recommendation was adopted. The committee appointed by the General Conference of 1860 to make a new collection of hymns, better adapted to meet the wants of the German members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this and other lands, reported that they had completed the work assigned to them, and offered the result of their labors for the approval of the Conference. One of their number, Rev. J. L. Walther, had never met with the committee, having fallen in the battle of Shiloh as chaplain of the Fifty-ninth Illinois Regiment.

Bishop Baker proposed a new plan for arranging the Discipline, and the New Hampshire Conference recommended to the General Conference the adoption of it. The Committee on Revisals having considered this arrangment, cordially approved of the same, as being, in their judgment, much more simple, logical and convenient than the old. They therefore submitted the following resolutions:

"1. *Resolved,* That the table of contents herewith submitted [showing the arrangement proposed] be printed.

"2. *Resolved*, That Bishop Baker be associated with the committee authorized to edit the new Discipline, in the execution of that work, and that they be instructed to adopt (so far as it is practicable, consistently with the modifications of the Discipline ordered at this General Conference) the arrangements proposed by Bishop Baker."

The Conference changed by a nearly unanimous vote the General Rule on Slavery, so as to make it read, "Slaveholding: buying or selling slaves." By proclamation of President Lincoln, slavery was abolished in all the states and portions of states wherever armed resistance was made to the authority of the General Government, on January 1, 1864. This proclamation was warranted by military necessity; but Congress took up the matter of slavery under the civil law of the country, and submitted an amendment of the Constitution to the several states of the Union, which by a majority of over two-thirds decreed the thirteenth amendment:

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Thirty-one out of thirty-six states ratified this amendment; Delaware and Kentucky rejected it, Texas did not vote on it, and Alabama and Mississippi ratified it conditionally. It was proclaimed as a part of the Constitution December 18, 1865; and thus was ended the long contest of slavery which had existed on the North American Continent for more than a century.

The General Rule having been changed by the Conference, there was no need of a special chapter on slavery to answer the oft repeated question, "What shall be done for the extirpation of slavery?" The bishops were requested to submit the resolution changing the rule to the annual conferences; and, if the requisite number of votes were obtained, to have inserted the new rule in all subsequent editions of the Discipline.

The Conference adjourned on Friday afternoon, May 27th, after a session of unusual interest and activity.

1868.

THE fifteenth delegated General Conference assembled in the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago, May 1, 1868. All the bishops were present, except Osmon C. Baker, who was detained by ill health. William L. Harris was elected secretary by acclamation. The Conference was composed of two hundred and thirty-one delegates, representing fifty-five annual conferences. Representatives from mission conferences were also in attendance, of which there were twelve, India being the only foreign mission. The subject of representation in the Conference from these mission conferences was referred to a special committee of seven members. Their report proposed to give the brethren from the mission conferences in this country all the rights of delegates, except to vote. A substitute was offered, to recognize these mission conferences, organized in the southern states, and to admit their representatives as delegates. To this an amendment was offered, changing the wording, but not the intention of the substitute. After a free discussion of the subject, it was moved and carried that the report of the committee, the substitute, and the amendment be laid on the table. William L. Harris then offered the following resolutions, which were adopted:

"*Resolved*, 1. That all action of the General Conference of 1864, restricting or purporting to restrict the rights and privileges of the annual conferences which the bishops were authorized by the said General Conference to form within the United States and territories, be and the same is hereby repealed.

"*Resolved*, 2. That the following conferences; namely, Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Holston, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and North Carolina, and Washington, are hereby declared to be annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and vested with all the rights, privileges, and immunities usual to annual conferences of said Church.

"*Resolved*, 3. That the provisional delegates to this body, elected by the aforesaid conferences severally, are hereby admitted to membership in this General Conference on the presentation of the required credentials.

"*Resolved*, 4. That a committee of seven be appointed, to which shall be referred the credentials of the said provisional delegates, together with so much of the journals of the said conferences as relates to their election, and that the committee report at the earliest practicable moment."

The committee reported on May 12th that the credentials of these provisional delegates were entirely satisfactory; and they were, by a vote of two hundred and five to nineteen, at once admitted to seats as regular delegates. Later in the session of the Conference, the mission conferences of Liberia, Germany and Switzerland, and India were declared to be annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and J. T. Gracey was admitted to membership in the General Conference as a delegate from the India Annual Conference.

Standing committees were appointed, on Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, Book Concern, Missions, Education, Revisals, Sunday-schools and Tracts, Lay Representation, Court of Appeals, Church Extension, State of the Church, and Freedmen. Special committees were also appointed on the American Bible Society, Pastoral Address, Temperance, Expenses of Delegates, Scandinavian Work, State of the Country, Seaman's Friend Society, American and Foreign Christian Union, Rules of Order, The Better Organization of our Local Preachers, Centenary Report, Use of Tobacco, Trusteeship of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Chaplaincies in the Army and Navy, and on other matters, as occasion arose.

Bishop Simpson read the Episcopal Address, and the Book Agents were directed to print the same in pamphlet form, and distribute copies among the delegations *pro rata*. The several parts of the address were appropriately referred among the various committees having the different subjects respectively in charge.

Rules of order were adopted; George W. Woodruff, R. H. Pattison, Edmund H. Waring, and George B. Jocelyn were elected assistant secretaries; and the secretary was appointed editor of the Journal of the General Conference.

A deputation from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, consisting of William Pirritte and George Abbs, was introduced. Their credentials accrediting them to the Con-

ference, and the Address of the Conference which they represented were read. They then delivered addresses, expressing their pleasure in bringing fraternal greetings and in reporting the growth and progress of Methodism in Canada.

William Morley Punshon, of the British Conference; Egerton Ryerson, of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, and Matthew Richey, of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Eastern British America, were introduced as fraternal delegates from their respective conferences. Their credentials were read, and the addresses of their conferences, after which each in turn delivered interesting and instructive addresses. The secretary then read the address of the Irish Wesleyan Conference. By invitation, Mr. Punshon preached before the Conference on Friday morning, May 15th. A special service of singing and prayer was held, by resolution of the Conference, on the same morning, to ask the counsel and blessing of the Almighty in the important question then pending in the United States Senate (the impeachment of Andrew Johnson).

T. J. Clewell and R. Dubs, delegates from the Evangelical Association, were introduced to the Conference, and after the reading of the address from the Association, both the visiting brethren addressed the Conference. These addresses and the papers presented by them were, by vote, referred to a special committee of five, to consider the fitness of a closer union between the two Churches.

Bishop Singleton T. Jones, of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, represented the General Conference (then in session) of that Church as a delegate, and said officially that it was ready to enter into arrangements by which to affiliate on the basis of equality with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to become with it one and inseparable. A committee was appointed on the proposals of union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, which reported the following resolutions:

"*Resolved*, 1. That we, having received the official communication of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, proposing union with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, and also the representations of the Rev. S. T. Jones on the same subject, with great satisfaction, we hereby express to them our Christian regards and deep interest in their progress and prosperity as a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"*Resolved*, 2. That this Conference entertains favorably the proposals of union between the two bodies aforesaid.

"*Resolved*, 3. That whereas the time of the sessions of these two General Conferences is so far spent that it will be impracticable to have the necessary negotiations, and to discuss and determine the details of the terms of union before their adjournment, that eight members of this body be appointed, who, with the bishops, shall constitute a commission to meet and confer with a similar commission of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and report to the next General Conference.

"*Resolved*, 4. That a copy of the foregoing action of this body be given to the delegate, and by him be forwarded to the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church."

The foregoing resolutions were adopted, and it was ordered that the commission to be appointed, as above, be empowered to treat with a similar commission from any other Methodist Church that may desire a like union.

A committee appointed on the John Street Church in the city of New York, the first Methodist Episcopal church built in the United States, recommended certain persons to be elected by the General Conference as trustees of the Church. This was done at the desire of the Church itself, the effect being that the trustees can never alienate or dispose of that historical church without the consent of the General Conference. The intention is to preserve this ancient landmark of Methodism to the Connection.

The Metropolitan Methodist Church in Washington having been erected in accordance with the action of the General Conference in 1852 and 1856, in order to provide for the payment of so costly an edifice, it was recommended that a collection be taken in each congregation for this purpose, on Independence Sabbath, July 5, 1868.

The Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in Cincinnati in 1866, received the sanction of the General Conference, which approved of its objects, and commended it to the liberal support of the people. The bishops were authorized to appoint a traveling preacher as its corresponding secretary, and the annual conferences were directed to place it upon their list of annual collections. Richard S. Rust, who had been connected with the society, was appointed the secretary.

The Western Methodist Book Concern was directed to secure a new act of incorporation; and the agents were authorized to establish a magazine for young people, to be under the editorial supervision of the editor of the *Ladies' Repository*. This magazine was commenced in January, 1869, and called the *Golden Hours*. It contained forty-eight pages, octavo, and was issued monthly. The agents were also authorized to publish a German magazine whenever it could be done without loss to the Concern.

Bishops Morris and Baker were relieved of all episcopal duties, except such as their own judgments might dictate or their health allow.

The Board of Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church submitted a report of its action during the previous four years; and the Conference directed that they should obtain a new and amended charter under the general law of Ohio, providing for the creation and regulation of incorporated companies. The section in the Discipline relating to this subject was changed, to adapt it to the new charter thus ordered.

Proper replies to the several Churches that had sent fraternal delegates or greetings were reported and adopted, and visiting delegates were appointed as follows: To the British Conference, Bishop Ames and D. P. Kidder; to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, J. W. Lindsay and Asbury Lowrey; to the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, S. C. Brown and B. F. Cocker; to the Methodist Conference of Eastern British America, J. T. Peck and G. D. Carrow; and to the General Conference of the Evangelical Association, William Nast, P. Kuhl, and Richard Haney. A committee was appointed on the subject of general Church union, to confer with like committees from other Churches.

Bishop Janes addressed the Conference, making his report as the representative of the Conference to the British Conference and as presiding bishop in the mission conferences of Germany and Switzerland; and Bishop Thomson made a report of his episcopal visit to India, China, and Bulgaria. Both reports were received with great satisfaction and delight, and were incorporated with the Journal.

The changes made in the Discipline since 1852 were or-

dered to be inserted in a new edition of Emory's "History of the Discipline," and published also in pamphlet form.

The printed Journal of the General Conference, substantially bound and duly certified by the secretary to be correct, was made the official Journal. The resolutions of the General Conference of 1836, censuring certain of its members for publicly speaking against the great evil of slavery, were rescinded and pronounced void; and the secretary was directed to transmit to the parties themselves, if living, or, if not, to their families, certified copies of this action.

The Western Book Agents were authorized to publish the New Orleans Advocate (the *Southwestern*), if the annual loss should not exceed two thousand dollars, and to establish and publish, at Atlanta, Knoxville, or Nashville, a weekly religious paper, with the same limitations as to loss. The agents in New York were also authorized to publish a paper at Charleston, S. C., on the same conditions.

A Board of Education was created, consisting of six ministers (two of them bishops) and six laymen, to become an incorporated body in New York City, and to administer funds given for the purpose, in promoting the cause of education in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The particular object is to aid young men preparing for the foreign missionary work, or for the ministry, and other students; to aid our theological schools; and to aid colleges, academies, and universities under the patronage of the Church. The second Sunday in June of each year was ordered to be observed as "Children's Day," and collections to be made in all our Sunday-schools for the benefit of the Children's Fund of this board. The Children's Fund was commenced during the centenary year, 1866, to assist meritorious Sunday-school scholars in obtaining a higher education; and these annual collections were ordered to be added thereto and separately invested.

Many memorials on the subject of lay representation in the General Conference were received and referred to the Committee on Lay Delegation. A report on the subject was made on May 29th, favoring lay delegation, and providing for the submission of an amendment to the second Restrictive Rule to the annual conferences, so as to authorize the introduction

of lay delegates. The report also provided that the question should be submitted to vote of all the laity of the Church; and if, in both the conferences of ministers and in the laity, the vote was in favor of lay delegation, then two lay delegates might be elected from each conference. The report contained the plan of electing lay delegates to the next General Conference, provisionally, on this contingency, and closed with this resolution:

"*Resolved,* That should a majority of votes cast by the people be in favor of lay delegation, and should three-fourths of all the members of the annual conferences present and voting thereon vote in favor of the above proposed change in the constitution of the Church, then the General Conference meeting in 1872 by the requisite two-thirds vote can complete the change, and lay delegates previously elected may then be admitted."

The report was adopted by a vote of two hundred and thirty-one to three; absent or not voting, eight.

A number of important changes were made in the Discipline. The number of annual conferences was increased from fifty-nine to seventy-one; a missionary jubilee, on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Missionary Society, April 4, 1869, was ordered, the occasion to be observed with devout thanksgiving and reminiscence, and voluntary offerings to be made for the express purpose of erecting a mission house in New York; commissioners were appointed to purchase ground and erect a building for the joint use of the Book Concern, Missionary Society, and connectional institutions in the city of New York, at a cost not to exceed one million of dollars; Book and Publishing Committees were appointed, and the following persons were elected as General Conference officials: Book Agents—New York: Thomas Carlton, John Lanahan; Cincinnati: Luke Hitchcock, John M. Walden. Editors—*Christian Advocate,* Daniel Curry; *Western Christian Advocate,* Stephen M. Merrill; *Quarterly Review,* D. D. Whedon; *Ladies' Repository,* Isaac W. Wiley; *Northwestern Christian Advocate,* John M. Reid; *Central,* B. F. Crary; *Pittsburgh,* S. H. Nesbit; *Northern,* D. D. Lore; *California,* H. C. Benson; *Pacific,* Isaac Dillon; *Sunday-school Advocate* and Library Books, Daniel Wise; *Sunday-school Journal* and Books of Instruction, John H.

Vincent; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast. Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society, John P. Durbin; First Assistant Secretary, William L. Harris; Second Assistant Secretary, to reside in the West (after two ballotings without result, the election was indefinitely postponed). Corresponding Secretary of the Church Extension Society, Alpha J. Kynett. Eleazer Thomas was elected Assistant Book Agent (New York), to reside in San Francisco.

The secretary of the Conference was appointed to edit the Discipline; Brooklyn was chosen as the place for holding the next General Conference; and on the 2d day of June the Conference adjourned.

1872.

THIS year the General Conference met in the city of Brooklyn, on Wednesday morning, May 1st. The place of assembling was the Academy of Music. Seventy-two conferences were represented; and at the organization of the Conference, two hundred and ninety delegates out of two hundred and ninety-two entitled to seats were in attendance. William L. Harris was elected secretary by acclamation. As the annual conferences had voted in favor of the admission of lay delegates to the General Conference, 4,915 of the preachers in favor and 1,597 against, according to the report of the bishops, thus making more than the necessary three-fourths' vote, and as the laity had also voted by a large majority in favor of lay representation, it only remained for the General Conference to complete the change in the Constitution of the Church, in order to admit the lay delegates who had been provisionally elected according to the plan submitted. After the report of the vote in the annual conferences had been read, Jesse T. Peck and others offered the following paper:

"WHEREAS, The General Conference at its session in Chicago in 1868 devised a plan for the admission of lay delegates as members of said General Conference, and recommended it to the godly consideration of our ministers and people; and

"WHEREAS, A large majority of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church present and voting in accordance with the provisions of said plan voted in favor of lay delegation; and

"WHEREAS, Three-fourths of the members of the annual conferences voted in favor of the change of the Restrictive Rules proposed in said plan, for the purpose of making it lawful to admit to the General Conference lay delegates elected in accordance with said plan; therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1. By the delegates of the several annual conferences in General Conference assembled, that the change in the Restrictive Rules submitted by the General Conference and adopted by the required three-fourths of the members of the annual conferences voting thereon in accordance with the provisions of said plan, in the words following, to wit: [see Plan] be and hereby is adopted.

Resolved, 2. That said plan is hereby ratified and adopted, and declared to be in full force; and the lay delegates elected under it

are hereby invited to take their seats as members of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on their credentials now in the hands of the secretary."

The following resolution was offered as a substitute for the first resolution, and passed by a vote of 283 ayes to 6 nays.

"*Resolved*, That this General Conference does hereby concur with the annual conferences in changing the Second Restrictive Rule, so as to read as follows:

" 'They shall not allow of more than one ministerial representative for every fourteen members of an annual conference; nor allow of less than one for every forty-five, nor more than two lay delegates for any annual conference.' "

On the second resolution of J. T. Peck and others, the Conference ordered a division of the question, so as to vote on so much of it as ratifies and adopts the "plan" of lay delegation. The vote resulted in 253 ayes and 36 nays. The first item of the resolution so adopted is in these words:

"*Resolved*, That the said plan is hereby ratified and adopted."

By this action, *Answer 1* to the *Question:* "Who shall compose the General Conference, and what are the regulations and powers belonging to it?" was so changed as to read as it now stands in the Discipline, with only one or two verbal alterations.

Samuel A. W. Jewett submitted, as a substitute for the remaining portion of the resolution, a motion:

"That the roll of laymen whose certificates of election are in the hands of the secretary be now called, and that those persons who may be duly accredited be admitted to seats in this General Conference."

On this motion the votes were 288 ayes and one nay.

On motion, the preamble of J. T. Peck's resolutions was laid on the table, after which certificates of the election of one hundred and twenty-nine lay delegates by the several electoral conferences were presented, and all who were present were admitted to seats. Permission was granted to the laymen to express their sentiments on this occasion; and James Strong, of the Newark conference, submitted and read an address on

their behalf. The ministerial delegates, by resolution, reciprocated their expressions of esteem and confidence.

Standing committees were ordered on Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, Book Concern, Missions, Education, Revisals, Sunday-schools and Tracts, Appeals, Church Extension, Freedmen, and State of the Church—these committees to consist of one member from each annual conference delegation, to be nominated by the said delegations.

Oliver S. Munsell, John M. Phillips (reserve lay delegate acting in place of Philip B. Swing, not present, from the Cincinnati Conference), D. N. Cooley (lay delegate from Upper Iowa Conference), and Edward A. Manning were elected assistant secretaries. Rules of order were adopted and published in the *Daily Christian Advocate.*

Special committees, to consist of seven members each, were appointed on Temperance, Pastoral Address, Expenses of Delegates, American Bible Society, Metropolitan Church at Washington, Scandinavian Work, and Fraternal Correspondence. Also committee of thirteen on Church Insurance; of twenty-five on the Support of Bishops, Expenses of Delegates, and Other Church Expenses; of five on Erecting a Monument over the Grave of Bishop Kingsley in Syria, and of nine on the Centennial of American Independence in 1876.

During the preceding quadrennium four of the bishops had died—Osmon C. Baker, Calvin Kingsley, Edward Thomson, and Davis W. Clark. Memorial services were ordered to be held; and on Saturday, May 18th, these services were presided over by Freeborn G. Hibbard. Bishop Simpson read a brief sketch of each of the deceased bishops, and addresses were then made as follows: On Bishop Thomson, by Daniel Curry; on Bishop Baker, by Lorenzo R. Thayer; on Bishop Clark, by Luke Hitchcock; and on Bishop Kingsley, by Moses Hill.

Luke H. Wiseman and Wm. Morley Punshon, fraternal delegates from the British Conference, were introduced to the Conference, May 8th, and presented their credentials as delegates and the address of the British Conference to the General Conference. The credentials and the address having been read, they both addressed the Conference. Howard Crosby, fraternal delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

Church, was introduced, and presented his credentials. He then addressed the Conference. Joseph W. McKay, an accredited delegate from the Irish Wesleyan Conference, presented the address from his conference, and addressed the Conference.

George R. Sanderson and Alexander Sutherland were introduced as delegates from the Wesleyan Conference of Canada; Henry Pope, as delegate from the Wesleyan Conference of Eastern British America; E. A. Wheat, C. H. Williams, J. B. Hamilton, and others, from "The Methodist Church;" Dr. George B. Bacon, from the American Congregational Council, and Joseph Wild and Michael Benson from the Canada Methodist Episcopal Church. On May 11th, addresses were delivered by the delegates from four of the corresponding bodies before the General Conference; Messrs. Wild and Benson speaking on May 14th. The Committee on Correspondence was instructed to prepare suitable resolutions in reference to the addresses from the fraternal delegates, just delivered.

The Committee on Fraternal Correspondence on a later day reported answers to these addresses, which were adopted, the secretary, G. W. Woodruff, and W. L. Harris being authorized to edit the same before they should be engrossed for delivery.

On May 16th, John J. Murray, a fraternal delegate from the Methodist Protestant Church, was received, and he delivered an address to the Conference. Hon. George Vickers, a co-delegate, could not be present, but he forwarded a letter, which was read to the Conference. Bishop Singleton T. Jones, of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, sent a letter, stating that on account of disaffection in that Church on the subject of union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, he desired that further negotiations looking to that end might be stayed for the present. The address of the Evangelical Association to the General Conference was read on May 22d, and R. Dubs and Thomas Bowman, delegates from that Church, addressed the Conference.

On May 27th the fraternal delegates from the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, Drs. Gillette and Dunn, were introduced, and addressed the Conference. On June 1st a fraternal letter to the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in session in Nashville, Tenn., was

read and adopted. This letter was in answer to a telegram received from that Conference a few days previously.

The following brethren were, on the nomination of the Committee on Fraternal Relations, appointed fraternal delegates to the several bodies named: English Wesleyan Conference: the bishop who shall attend the conference in Germany and Switzerland and J. A. McCauley; alternate, F. G. Hibbard; Irish Wesleyan Conference, same as above; Canada Wesleyan Conference, Miner Raymond, A. C. George; Eastern British America Conference, William R. Clark, William H. Elliott; Canada Methodist Episcopal Church, Moses Hill, Homer Eaton; African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Lucius C. Matlock, James Lynch; Methodist Church in the United States, Wm. Hunter, Gideon Martin; Methodist Protestant Church, Wesley Kenney, Joseph M. Trimble; Evangelical Association, Jacob Rothweiler, James F. Chalfant; National Council of Congregational Churches, Stephen Allen, J. C. W. Coxe, Otis H. Tiffany; General Assembly of Presbyterian Church, S. H. Nesbit, Jacob B. Graw; and Baptist Church (through their Missionary Societies), C. D. Foss, D. Stevenson.

The secretary was requested to prepare and cause to be printed a manual, containing the rules of order, the roll of delegates, list of standing committees, with the times and places of meeting, and such other information as he might deem necessary for the use and convenience of the Conference.

On petition of a convention of colored members in Georgia and of the Georgia Conference, the organization of a Conference of colored preachers in that state was referred to the Committee on Boundaries. The work among colored people had heretofore been looked after chiefly by white conferences or mixed white and colored conferences. It was thought that new conferences, consisting of colored preachers only, might be organized in the South; hence this request from Georgia. The Lexington Conference had been formed out of the Kentucky Conference during the quadrennium, composed of colored preachers; and the Washington Conference, of colored preachers, had only been organized.

The principal subject which occupied the attention of the Conference was the Book Concern. During the quadrennium

just ended, the Junior Book Agent, John Lanahan, discovered in some of the departments of the business loose methods of keeping the accounts and other irregularities; and he believed there were also frauds, causing great losses to the Concern. The Senior Agent, Thomas Carlton, did not credit the statement that frauds had been committed by any of the employees; but to make the matter clear, both the Agents and the Book Committee, to which it had been referred, and which had heard both the accusation and the defense, engaged expert accountants to examine all the books, accounts, and correspondence of the Agents, to discover anything wrong, if it existed. The Book Committee presented both a majority and a minority report, the former being accompanied by the report of James P. Kilbreth, who had been employed as a referee. In addition to the joint report of the Agents at New York, Dr. Lanahan made a sub-report, defending his official conduct, and Dr. Carlton presented a rejoinder. S. J. Goodenough, superintendent of the printing-department, also sent a communication; and John A. Gunn made a defense of his report submitted to Dr. Carlton, and embodied in the minority report of the Book Committee.

A special committee on the Book Concern, to consist of one member from each annual conference delegation, was ordered, and each delegation thereupon selected a member to serve on this committee. To this committee were referred all reports and papers relative to alleged frauds and irregularities in the Book Concern; but all other papers pertaining to the publishing interests of the Church were referred to the regular standing committee on the Book Concern. In case any member of the special committee should be absent, the delegation which appointed him was authorized to fill his place. This committee, after a full and patient investigation of all the irregularities and alleged frauds in the Book Concern at New York, made an elaborate report, stating: 1. That the evidence showed that frauds had been practiced in the bindery, whereby the Book Concern had suffered loss; 2. That there had been irregularities in the management of the business of the house, by which losses had been, or might have been, sustained; 3. That such losses, if any, were not of sufficient magnitude to en-

danger the financial strength of the establishment or to impair its capital; 4. That the business methods used had been such as to afford opportunities for frauds and peculations by subordinates; 5. That no Agent or Assistant Agent is or had been implicated or interested in any frauds that may have been practiced in the Concern; 6. That the present methods of keeping accounts and of conducting the business are such as to insure reasonable and ordinary protection against frauds and irregularities; and 7. That the report of the Agents was a fair exhibit of the assets and liabilities of the Concern. The report was adopted.

The boundaries of seventy-six conferences, a gain of five since the preceding General Conference, were defined; the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, organized by a select number of women in Boston, in 1869, was recognized as a valuable institution of the Church; and it was determined to elect a secretary for the Board of Education, and again ordered that the second Sunday of June, annually, be everywhere observed as "Children's Day," and that on that day a collection be taken in the Sunday-school in aid of the Sunday-school Fund of the Board of Education.

It was reported in the Conference that Abel Minard, of Morristown, N. J., had established a Home, and secured a charter therefor, for the training of daughters of foreign missionaries of our Church, for the reception of orphan and half-orphan daughters of our deceased ministers, and also for such other orphan and half-orphan girls as the trustees might admit, and had secured the same to the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was therefore resolved that the Minard Home be commended to the generous liberality of the Church and to the public.

The Committee on the State of the Church reported an amendment to the chapter in the Discipline on imprudent conduct, so as to make more explicit the General Rule on the subject of sinful amusements. These amusements were grouped as dancing, playing at games of chance, theater-going, horse-races, circuses, dancing parties or balls, patronizing dancing-schools, and taking such other amusements as are obviously of misleading or questionable moral tendency. The report

was adopted, and their recommendation has been embodied in the Discipline.

The Agents of the Methodist Book Concern in New York were authorized and recommended to establish a monthly Methodist magazine in Boston, to be under the management of the Boston Wesleyan Association, provided that a satisfactory arrangement could be made between the Agents and the association, and provided that the Book Concern be guaranteed against loss. If so established, the bishops were authorized to appoint an editor.

On nomination of the bishops, the General Conference elected Boards of Managers for the Missionary, Church Extension, Sunday-school, Tract, and Freedmen's Aid Societies.

It was recommended by the Conference that the Centennial of the Independence of the United States be celebrated during the month of June, closing with July 4, 1876, by all the Churches and people of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that collections be then made for the benefit of our local and connectional interests.

The Ladies and Pastors' Christian Union, an organization founded in Philadelphia for religious work in the homes of the people, and for the evangelization of the neglected masses in our cities, under the supervision of the regular pastorate, was sanctioned and commended by the Conference, and a Constitution was adopted for the Union. The bishops were directed to adopt the necessary measures to procure for it an act of incorporation, and the pastors of our Churches were instructed to co-operate with the society in carrying out the important work for which it was organized.

The Agents of the Methodist Book Concern were made co-ordinate, two to be elected for New York and two for Cincinnati; and it was determined that in the selection of the General Book Committee no person who had served on such committee during the last four years should be reappointed.

The presiding elders were empowered to form district conferences in their districts wherever a majority of the quarterly conferences of the circuits and stations shall have approved of the same. These district conferences were to be composed of all traveling and local preachers in the district, the exhort-

ers, the district stewards, and the Sunday-school superintendents. These conferences were authorized to have a general oversight of all the temporal and spiritual affairs of the district, to license local preachers and have supervision over them, to look after benevolent contributions, inquire into the condition of the Sunday-schools, to take measures for extending the work of the Church into neglected territory, and establish mission Sunday-schools therein, and provide for religious and literary exercises during their own sessions.

In consequence of the decease of Bishops Baker, Kingsley, Thomson, and Clark since the last General Conference, the infirmities of Bishop Morris, and the enlargement of the work of the conferences, it was deemed best to elect eight men to the Episcopacy. The ballots for new bishops were taken May 20th, 21st, and 22d, and resulted in the election of Thomas Bowman, William Logan Harris, Randolph Sinks Foster, Isaac William Wiley, Stephen Mason Merrill, Edward Gayer Andrews, Gilbert Haven, and Jesse Truesdell Peck. Their consecration to the office and work of a bishop took place May 24th.

The Conference located the residences of the newly elected bishops at San Francisco, St. Louis, Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Council Bluffs or vicinity, and St. Paul—the bishops selecting their place of residence according to their seniority in official position. The support of the bishops was made a direct charge upon the Church, the same as that of other ministers, the Book Committee estimating the amounts necessary for this purpose, and assessing them upon the annual conferences according to their several ability. The annual conferences were directed to apportion the amounts so assessed upon them to the several districts, and the district stewards to the several charges. The amounts collected under this provision were ordered to be paid to the Book Agents, by them to be paid to the bishops.

Arrangements were made for meeting the expenses of the next General Conference by collections in all the Churches, the amounts estimated as necessary for this purpose to be distributed by the bishops among the several conferences, which conferences were to take the necessary means to collect the same.

William L. Harris, having been chosen a bishop, resigned his place as secretary of the conference, and George W. Woodruff was elected in his stead, May 23d. They were appointed to edit the Journal of the General Conference and the new edition of the Discipline.

The appeals were heard and the action of the conferences in the various cases reviewed, and disposal of the same made, of the following persons: Richard May, of California Conference, remanded; W. G. Fowler, of Missouri, affirmed; J. S. Moore, Southern Illinois, remanded; B. D. Palmer, Newark, remanded; W. R. Hoback, North Indiana, remanded; Henry S. Shaw, Northwest Indiana, affirmed; J. B. Craig, Central Illinois, affirmed; T. B. Taylor, of Kansas, remanded; A. J. Kirkpatrick, of Iowa, reversed; Jonathan Vannote, of New Jersey, reversed, and W. M. Smith, of Colorado, laid over, as neither prosecutor nor counsel for the appellant or the appellant himself was present.

Inasmuch as the hearing of appeals, even though they might be referred to a committee, has always consumed a great deal of time in the General Conference, it was deemed proper to provide some other method of determining such cases; and appeals, therefore, instead of coming before the General Conference, were ordered to be made to a select number of elders, to be known as "Triers of Appeals." The several annual conferences were directed to choose annually seven judicious elders to try appeals. If any member of an annual conference is convicted after trial, for any cause, he may appeal his case to a judicial conference, to be composed of the Triers of Appeals from three conferences, conveniently near to that from which the appeal is taken, to be designated by the bishop having charge of that conference; and thirteen Triers at least must be present to constitute a quorum. One of the bishops shall preside. The judicial conference shall appoint a secretary, who shall keep a faithful record of all the proceedings, and at the close of the trial transmit the records made and the papers submitted in the case to the secretary of the preceding General Conference, to be filed and preserved with the papers of that body.

In order to place the Methodist Episcopal Church in the truly fraternal relations towards the Methodist Episcopal

Church, South, which were proposed by that Church in 1848, it was resolved by the General Conference that a delegation consisting of two ministers and one layman should be appointed to convey the fraternal greetings of this Conference to the General Conference of the Church, South, at its next ensuing session. In pursuance of this resolution, the bishops appointed Albert S. Hunt, Charles H. Fowler, and General Clinton B. Fisk.

The proposed union of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church with the Methodist Episcopal Church fell through on account of disaffection among the preachers of the former Church.

The bishops were requested to appoint a commission of six persons, three ministers and three laymen, to prepare a succinct code of ecclesiastical jurisprudence and procedure, embracing the general principles applicable to Church trials, and report to the next General Conference.

The following General Conference officials were elected: Book Agents, New York, Reuben Nelson, John M. Phillips; Cincinnati, Luke Hitchcock, John M. Walden. Secretaries, Missionary Society, Robert L. Dashiell, Thomas M. Eddy, John M. Reid, and John P. Durbin, honorary secretary; Church Extension Society, Alpha J. Kynett; Freedmen's Aid Society, Richard S. Rust; Board of Education, Erastus O. Haven. Editors, *Methodist Quarterly Review*, Daniel D. Whedon; *Ladies' Repository* and *Golden Hours*, Erastus Wentworth; *Christian Advocate*, New York, Daniel Curry; *Western Christian Advocate*, Francis S. Hoyt; *Northern*, Dallas D. Lore; *Pittsburg*, William Hunter; *Northwestern*, Arthur Edwards; *Central*, Benjamin St. James Fry; *California*, Henry C. Benson; *Pacific*, Isaac Dillon; (Atlanta) *Methodist Advocate*, Nelson E. Cobleigh; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast; German Family Magazine *(Haus und Herd)* and Books, Henry Liebhart.

In the preparation of the new Discipline for 1872, the editor omits the form of question and answer, and the paragraphs are numbered consecutively throughout the volume. Other revisions and changes ordered by the General Conference are made in this edition, but none affecting the general efficiency of the Church in its economy or work.

The Conference adjourned June 4th.

1876.

THE General Conference of this year was held in the city of Baltimore, commencing on Monday, May 1st. Eighty conferences were represented, and two hundred and thirty-two clerical and one hundred and thirty-three lay delegates were entitled to seats. Of these, nearly three hundred were present at the first session. According to arrangement, the Conference assembled in the Academy of Music. All the bishops were in attendance. George W. Woodruff was elected secretary, and Israel C. Pershing, David S. Monroe, William Wells, George Mather, James W. FitzGerald, William J. Paxson, and Isaac S. Bingham assistant secretaries. The city of St. Louis had been chosen by the last General Conference as the place for holding the present session; but for various reasons it was found to be impracticable to convene in that city, and on the recommendation of more than three-fourths of the annual conferences the change was made to Baltimore. As soon as the General Conference was organized, this change was ratified and confirmed.

Bishop Andrews read a Centennial Address of the Bishops to the pastors and congregations of the Church in the United States. Rules of order were adopted, and standing committees were ordered to be chosen, to consist of one member from each of the annual conferences, as follows: on Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Missions, Education, Revisals, Sunday-schools and Tracts, Church Extension, Freedmen, State of the Church, Book Concern, and Boundaries.

Special committees were ordered and appointed on Centennial Observance, of nine members; Rules of Order, seven members; Time and Place for Receiving Fraternal Delegates, five members; Judiciary, twelve members; Lay Representation, two ministers and two laymen from each General Conference district; Expenses of the General Conference and Delegates, seven members; Reception of Fraternal Delegates, five members; Temperance, Pastoral Address, and American Bible Society, seven members each; Revisal of Hymn Book, nine

members; New Charters for our Benevolent Institutions or Religious Associations, five members; Expenses of Judicial Conference, one member from each General Conference district; Memorial Services, five members; and on Correspondence, five members.

Bishop Janes read the Quadrennial Address of the Bishops; and the several committees were instructed to consider and report upon such portions of the Address as relate to the interests which they have in charge.

William B. Pope and James H. Rigg were introduced to the Conference as the fraternal representatives of the British Wesleyan Conference, on Saturday morning, May 6th; and they presented their credentials and the Address of their conference. These were then read, after which, according to the arrangements made by the Committee of Reception, they both addressed the Conference.

John Lanahan presented a memorial from C. H. Richardson and others, containing certain adverse statements concerning the solvency of the Western Methodist Book Concern. The substance of this memorial had been given to the public through the reports of the Associated Press; and on motion of John M. Walden, it was

"*Resolved*, That the Committee on the Book Concern is hereby instructed to consider the subject of said memorial, and report at the earliest moment practicable upon the financial condition of the Western Methodist Book Concern."

The committee diligently examined into the statements made by the memorialists, and reported that the property owned by the Book Concern in Cincinnati and elsewhere amounted to $789,749.16, and its liabilities were $486,463.48. The charge made was that there was only $446,526.15 of actual property, and these figures were made up by throwing out $543,526.16 worth of property, the value of which able business men in Cincinnati reckoned at par. The report closed with the following resolution, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority:

"*Resolved*, That the assertion of the memorialists that the Western Book Concern is 'practically insolvent' and is 'in an unsound, dangerous, and bankrupt condition,' is both unjust and untrue, and

entitled to no consideration by the public, and that any member of the Methodist Episcopal Church who was instrumental in its clandestine publication in the newspapers deserves the censure of this General Conference and the condemnation of every true friend of the Church."

Fraternal delegates were received from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, viz., James A. Duncan and Landon C. Garland. The venerable Lovick Pierce, the senior member of the delegation, sent a warm and cordial address to the Conference, not being able to be present in person. They presented their credentials on Friday, May 12th, and both addressed the Conference. Delegates were also received from the Methodist Church (Alexander Clark), the Methodist Protestant Church (Silas B. Luther and Charles W. Button), National Council of Congregational Churches (J. E. Rankin), the African Methodist Episcopal Church (James H. A. Johnston, B. F. Tanner, and William F. Dickinson), the Presbyterian Church (Francis L. Patton), the Reformed Episcopal Church (Bishop George D. Cummins), the Canada Methodist Church (John A. Williams), the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada (Bishop Albert Carman and E. Lounsbury).

Reports were made to the Conference by the delegates appointed by authority of the General Conference of 1872 to visit the conferences and assemblies of the various Christian denominations named—the African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Baptist Church, Wesleyan Conference of Eastern British America, British Wesleyan Conference, Evangelical Association, the Methodist Church, Methodist Protestant Church, Presbyterian Church, and the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion (United States).

A complaint was made by John Lanahan that the Journal of the General Conference of 1872 was incomplete, by the omission of an important part of a report (that on the Methodist Book Concern); and Bishop Harris and George W. Woodruff, who were co-editors of the Journal, asked for a committee to inquire into the alleged omission. The committee was ordered, and William Rice, Henry B. Ridgaway, C. Aultman, J. Leaton, and J. B. Weaver were appointed.

The committee, after investigating the matter, reported that the report of John A. Gunn, expert accountant, who was employed to examine the books and accounts of the Book Concern, was laid before the Conference of 1872 during the call of May 20th, and that under the rule it went to the appropriate committee, and from that moment it ceased to be under the control of the secretaries, nor was there any rule of the Conference by which the secretaries could reclaim it. The document was published in the *Daily Advocate*, May 23d, but with the exhibits and appendix omitted. The secretaries, in compiling matter for the appendix to the Journal, not having the original in their possession, inserted the report of Mr. Gunn as it appeared in the *Advocate*, under the belief that it was complete. Accordingly the committee expressed their opinion that the secretaries were wholly without blame in the matter. The report was adopted, and the secretaries exonerated.

The Committee on Ecclesiastical Jurisprudence appointed by the General Conference of 1872 brought in two reports, a majority and a minority report, both of which were referred to a special committee of nine, composed of Wm. H. Hunter, Morris D'C. Crawford, Geo. L. Clark, Luke Hitchcock, Jacob Rothweiler, Stephen B. Ransom, Daniel P. Mitchell, Wm. S. Prentice, and John W. Ray. The report of this committee was made on May 27th, but was not taken up for discussion until the last day of the session, May 31st. After some time was spent in the consideration of its several items, the whole subject was indefinitely postponed; and, on motion of R. M. Hatfield, the bishops were requested to appoint a new committee of five, to whom the report which had been submitted and the whole subject of an ecclesiastical code might be referred, to report at the General Conference of 1880.

The Conference considered the subject of changing the character and scope of the *Ladies' Repository*, with a view to making it a magazine of a wider range and adapting it to the Church at large, and not confining it to the women particularly. The Committee on the Book Concern offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

"*Resolved*, That the Agents of the Western Book Concern, the editor of the *Ladies' Repository*, and the Western Section of the

General Book Committee be authorized to change the name or modify the scope and style of the *Ladies' Repository* and the *Golden Hours*, published at Cincinnati, as they may deem best."

The bishops were requested to select and appoint in addition five men of thorough literary culture and intimate acquaintance with the intellectual and religious wants of the Church and country, to co-operate with the Book Agents in New York and the committee appointed by the foregoing resolution, in effecting these changes.

After the representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had addressed the Conference, and the letter of Lovick Pierce had been read, a motion was made and carried that a committee of seven be appointed, to whom shall be referred the matters presented by the said representatives relating to the appointment of a commission of five to consider and adjust the points of difference between the two great branches of Methodism. The committee appointed was as follows: Clinton B. Fisk, Augustus C. George, Oliver Hoyt, Fernando C. Holliday, J. D. Blake, W. R. Clark, and J. W. W. Bolton. On May 19th they reported, recommending that the bishops be directed to appoint a commission, consisting of three ministers and two laymen, to meet with a similar commission authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to adjust all existing difficulties. The report was adopted; and the bishops appointed Morris D'C. Crawford, Enoch L. Fancher, Erasmus Q. Fuller, Clinton B. Fisk, and John P. Newman members of this commission on behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

During the preceding quadrennium Bishop Morris and Missionary Bishop Roberts had both died—the former at his home in Springfield, O., September 2, 1874, and the latter in Liberia, January 30, 1875. Besides these, Thomas M. Eddy, one of the secretaries of the Missionary Society; Dallas D. Lore, editor of the *Northern Christian Advocate*, and Nelson E. Cobleigh, editor of the Atlanta *Methodist Advocate*, died in office. Special memorial services were held in commemoration of their work and character on May 16th. Bishop Janes pronounced a eulogy on Bishop Morris and Missionary Bishop Roberts; R. L. Dashiell reverted to the life and character of

T. M. Eddy; E. O. Haven paid a tribute to the memory of D. D. Lore, and Joseph Cummings spoke concerning N. E. Cobleigh.

It was resolved to hold special centennial services in the Academy of Music on May 21st, at three o'clock P. M., in commemoration of the session of a Methodist Conference in Baltimore, May 21, 1776, and arrangements for the same were accordingly made. On that occasion Bishop Ames presided, and after the opening exercises John Lanahan read some extracts from the early Minutes, showing the state of the Church one hundred years ago. J. H. Brown, of the Baltimore Conference; Bishop Simpson, and R. S. Matthews made addresses appropriate to the occasion.

The Committee on the Book Concern reported favorably on a petition from the Louisiana Conference, asking that the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, now published in New Orleans as a private enterprise, be adopted as an official weekly paper under the control of the General Book Committee, beginning June 1st, proximo. They recommended also that if the expense of publishing the paper exceed two thousand dollars a year, and such excess shall not be provided for and paid by the patronizing conferences, the paper shall be discontinued. The report was adopted.

The following General Conference officials were elected, to serve for four years: Book Agents, New York, Reuben Nelson, John M. Phillips; Cincinnati, Luke Hitchcock, John M. Walden. Secretaries, Missionary Society, R. L. Dashiell, John M. Reid; Church Extension Society, Alpha J. Kynett; Freedmen's Aid Society, Richard S. Rust. Editors, *Methodist Quarterly Review*, Daniel D. Whedon; *Christian Advocate* (New York), Charles H. Fowler; *Ladies' Repository* and *Golden Hours*, Daniel Curry; *Western Christian Advocate*, Francis S. Hoyt; *Northern*, O. H. Warren; *Pittsburgh*, Alfred Wheeler; *Northwestern*, Arthur Edwards; *Central*, Benjamin St. James Fry; *California*, Henry C. Benson; *Pacific*, John H. Acton; *Southwestern*, H. R. Revels; *Methodist Advocate*, Erasmus Q. Fuller; Sunday-school Papers, Books, and Tracts, John H. Vincent; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast; *Haus und Herd* and German Books, Henry Liebhart.

The Committee on the Revision of the Hymn Book reported that they were unanimously of the opinion that a thorough revision of the Hymn Book then in use was imperatively demanded, and recommended that the Bishops be requested to appoint, as soon as practicable, a committee of fifteen, to whom should be committed the work of revision and also the preparation of a suitable Hymn and Tune Book for the use of the Church. The report was adopted, and the bishops accordingly appointed the Committee of Revision. This committee at once set about the duty assigned to them, and in eighteen months completed their task. After a careful examination of the result of their labors, the bishops approved the new hymnal, which was published by the Agents of the Book Concern, and put into circulation early in 1878. This is the hymnal now in use throughout the Church.

A few changes were made in the Discipline; and several were proposed, which were not enacted—among them the never-settled method of appointing the presiding elders. Many were still in favor of electing presiding elders in the several annual conferences by a vote of the preachers on the nomination of the presiding bishops. Though the question had come up in the General Conference at every session from 1804 to 1824, yet the decisive vote of 1824 had not settled it. The matter was only kept in abeyance. Now it came up again, but it was promptly voted down as before. Ecclesiastical conservatism is always strong.

It was made the duty of the several annual conferences to make arrangements for raising the amount apportioned to them to meet the expenses of the General Conference; and it was recommended to them to require all candidates for the ministry to pledge themselves wholly to abstain from the use of tobacco. A form of constitution for Sunday-schools was adopted, the international series of Sunday-school lessons cordially approved, and new conferences authorized to be formed. Mixed conferences of white and colored ministers might, whenever it should be requested by a majority of the white members, and also of the colored members, be divided into two or more conferences.

The bishops were requested to appoint a commission of

five ministers and five laymen to consider the propriety of introducing lay delegation into the annual conferences, and, if they deem it expedient, to report a plan to the next General Conference.

A committee was appointed to prepare a plan of organization for the next General Conference, so as to save time in the appointment and organization of the standing committees. A committee was ordered to be appointed by the bishops to consider the question of holding an ecumenical conference of Methodism, and arrange for the same. A proposed change in the ratio of representation from one member for forty-five to one member for ninety-nine was ordered to be presented to the annual conferences for concurrence at their next ensuing sessions. Some new advices were given on the subject of temperance; William L. Harris was appointed editor of the new Discipline; and the Conference adjourned, after an address by Bishop Janes and religious services, on the 31st day of May.

1880.

THE eighteenth delegated General Conference met in Pike's Opera House, in Cincinnati, May 1st. This was the only available place suitable for holding the Conference, as none of the churches was large enough. Ninety-five annual conferences were represented; and the whole number of delegates was three hundred and ninety-nine, of which number one hundred and fifty-one were laymen. George W. Woodruff was elected secretary by acclamation, and he was granted permission to name his own assistants. He nominated David S. Monroe, Central Pennsylvania; Isaac S. Bingham, Northern New York; Lew E. Darrow, Des Moines; George Mather, North Ohio; Henry B. Heacock, California, and James P. Magee, New England; and they were confirmed by the Conference. Later in the session, James N. FitzGerald was added to the list. The committee ordered just at the close of the last General Conference on an Ecclesiastical Code submitted to the present General Conference a report for consideration and adoption. The report was received and on motion was made the order of the day for Friday, May 7th, at ten o'clock, A. M.; but this motion was afterward reconsidered, and laid on the table. A new committee was then appointed, consisting of eleven persons, three of whom were bishops, to prepare a report on the code.

The Quadrennial Address of the Bishops was read by Bishop Simpson, and five thousand copies were ordered to be printed in pamphlet form for general circulation. The several portions and recommendations of the Address were referred to the appropriate committees, which were appointed.

Soon after the organization of the Conference, Dr. John R. Goodwin, a lay delegate from the Southeastern Indiana Conference, was called to his home in Brookville, Ind., and while there was killed by a maniac brother. His death was announced on Tuesday morning, May 4th, in the Conference, and a committee of four lay members was appointed to attend his funeral. A committee of five was also appointed to pre-

pare suitable resolutions of sympathy and respect upon this sad occasion.

A committee was appointed on the Centennial of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which brought in a report recommending its observance, and suggesting various objects for the centennial gifts of the Church; but as a substitute for the whole report, the bishops were requested to devise a plan for the centennial year, and report to the Church as early as convenient.

A committee on the reception of fraternal delegates was appointed; and it was determined that their addresses and credentials should be presented at St. Paul Church, corner of Smith and Seventh Streets, only in the evenings, as might be arranged for by the committee. The following fraternal delegates were introduced to the Conference: From the British Conference, William Arthur and Frederick W. Macdonald; Irish Conference, Wallace McMullen; Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Atticus G. Haygood, James H. Carlisle; Presbyterian Church in the United States, John Jones; Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, E. B. Ryckman and Bidwell Lane; Reformed Episcopal Church, Bishop Samuel Fallows; African Methodist Episcopal Church, B. F. Lee, R. A. Johnson, and J. G. Mitchell; Methodist Protestant Church, J. J. Smith; General Conference of the Evangelical Association, Elias Kiplinger. Addresses were made by the fraternal delegates, according to the arrangement, in the evenings, so that the work of the Conference was not interrupted. Greetings were also received from the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States.

During the four years immediately preceding this session of the General Conference, Bishops Janes, Ames, and Haven were all called to their eternal reward. Bishop Janes died September 18, 1876; Bishop Ames died April 25, 1879, and Bishop Haven, January 3, 1880. Besides these eminent servants of the Church, the senior Book Agent in New York, Reuben Nelson, died, February 20, 1879; and the senior Secretary of the Missionary Society, Robert L. Dashiell, died March 8, 1880. Memorial services were held on May 18th, at which Cyrus D. Foss read the memoir of Bishop Janes, Charles H. Fowler that

of Bishop Ames, and Willard F. Mallalieu that of Bishop Haven. Dr. Daniel Curry made a brief address concerning Reuben Nelson, and suggested that some one more familiar with his life be appointed to write a memoir. David Copeland was appointed, and subsequently presented a memoir which is printed with the Journal. The memoir of Dr. Dashiell was read by John M. Reid. A minute was also adopted in reference to the death of John R. Goodwin.

Besides the usual standing committees, special committees were appointed on Expenses of Delegates, American Bible Society, Fraternal Correspondence, Temporal Economy, and other matters as need required.

Reports were received from the fraternal delegates sent by the General Conference of 1876 to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to the Wesleyan Connection of America, to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, to the Methodist Protestant Church, to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, to the Evangelical Association, and to the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Miss Frances E. Willard, president of the Woman's National Christian Temperance Union, came as a fraternal visitor from that society, and a resolution was offered that she be invited to address the Conference for ten minutes. It was moved to amend this motion by extending the same courtesy to all other ladies desiring to address the Conference. Much time was spent in the discussion of these motions, and the vote was finally taken on the amendment, by yeas and nays; two hundred and fourteen voting for the motion and one hundred and eighteen against. The next day Miss Willard sent a note to the Conference, presenting her "hearty thanks for the final vote," but declining "to use the hard-earned ten minutes allotted" to her.

Three of the bishops having died, and Bishop Scott being relieved of all episcopal work on account of feeble health, it was determined that the Episcopacy should be strengthened by the election of four additional bishops. On the first ballot Henry White Warren, of the Philadelphia Conference; Cyrus David Foss, of the New York Conference, and John Fletcher Hurst, of the Newark Conference, were elected; and on the

second ballot Erastus Otis Haven was elected. The consecration took place on Wednesday morning, May 19th. The Committee on Episcopacy reported, recommending that, in addition to the number of those now ordained, one bishop of African descent be elected, expressing their belief that the best interests of the Church in general and of the colored people in particular required this. A minority of the committee presented an adverse report. One or two of the colored delegates spoke eloquently in behalf of a colored bishop; but it was not thought best to elect any more bishops, and the whole subject was indefinitely postponed by a vote of two hundred and twenty-eight to one hundred and thirty-seven.

The Committee on the Ecclesiastical Code brought in its report, which, with a few amendments, was adoptetd. All the items of this report appear in their proper place in the Discipline for 1880, which Bishop Harris was appointed to edit. The Conference requested him to prepare a form of charges against an accused member, to be inserted in the Appendix. This was done, and the form thus prepared appears as requested.

The Committee on Lay Representation in the Annual Conferences presented a report favoring such representation, and suggesting a method of electing lay delegates, and their ratio in the several presiding elders' districts. To this report one or two amendments were offered; but on motion the whole subject was laid on the table by a vote of one hundred and eighty-four to one hundred and forty.

At the General Conference of 1876 a committee on the subject of holding an ecumenical conference of Methodism was appointed, to report to this Conference. A report was presented, accordingly, embodying the action of a joint committee from the various branches of Methodism, and suggesting the various topics for consideration at such a conference. The report was adopted, and Augustus C. George and Clinton B. Fisk were appointed members of the executive committee on behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Among the rules for the reception of preachers into full connection in the ministry, an additional question to be asked was inserted: "Will you wholly abstain from the use of to-

bacco?" This question was heretofore asked only at the discretion of the annual conferences, which might exclude a candidate from the ministry on account of his using tobacco; now it was made binding in all the conferences. In the earlier days of our Church history nearly all of our preachers as well as laymen were addicted to the use of this narcotic; but the general rule on "needless self-indulgence" began to gain a wider application, and many, both preachers and laymen, felt that the use of tobacco was inconsistent with the rule, and hence the quickened conscience of the Church on the subject.

The annual conferences were empowered to have their minutes printed and bound, and if duly certified by the secretary, such copy shall be considered official. No annual conference other than in foreign mission fields was allowed to be organized with less than fifteen effective members.

The *Pacific Christian Advocate* was discontinued as a General Conference paper, and the Agents were directed to make over and release to the publishing committee of that paper all their right, title, and interest in the same. They were also directed to pay twenty-five hundred dollars towards the debt of the paper, provided that this amount shall release them from any further obligations. The *California Christian Advocate* was ordered to be continued, and one thousand dollars per annum appropriated to aid in its publication. Its present debts were also to be paid.

Bishop Scott was released from episcopal duties, and made non-effective. For the better diffusion of information concerning the benevolent work of the Church, the Agents in New York were directed to publish a Church manual, either monthly or quarterly, to be sent to all our traveling preachers and to such others as may subscribe for the same. And the secretaries of the various societies and boards of the Church were constituted a Committee of Publication, to furnish for each issue four pages of matter concerning their special department of work.

The Italian Mission was granted permission to organize an annual conference in Italy; but the formation of independent Methodist Episcopal Churches in Europe and Asia was considered premature. The residences of the bishops were

determined, to be selected by the bishops according to seniority in office. It was recommended that all the foreign missions be visited twice by the bishops during the next quadrennium. The trustees of the Minard Home were granted permission to use or dispose of the property as they think best, and report to the next General Conference. The Home had no endowment to sustain it, and had so failed of the object for which it had been given to the Church. The official papers of the Church were directed to print missionary intelligence, to be furnished by the Missionary Secretaries. The *National Repository* and the *Golden Hours* were ordered to be discontinued at the end of the current year, for failure of support. An episcopal ruling that the Discipline provides neither for the ordaining nor licensing of women as local preachers was approved; but it was ordered that the masculine pronouns "he," "his," and "him," wherever they occur in the Discipline, shall not be construed as excluding women from the office of Sunday-school superintendent, class leader, or steward.

A few minor changes were made in the Discipline, and the constitutions of some of the Church societies were revised.

Juvenile temperance societies were allowed to be formed in all our Sunday-schools, and the temperance work of the women gratefully recognized and heartily commended.

The official elections in the Conference were as follows: Book Agents, New York, John M. Phillips, Sandford Hunt; Cincinnati, John M. Walden, William P. Stowe. Editors, *Methodist Quarterly Review*, D. D. Whedon; *Christian Advocate*, James M. Buckley; *Sunday-school Advocate* and Publications, John H. Vincent; *Northern Christian Advocate*, Orris H. Warren; *Pittsburgh*, Alfred Wheeler; *Western*, Francis S. Hoyt; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast; *Haus und Herd*, Henry Liebhart; *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, Arthur Edwards; *Central*, Benjamin St. J. Fry; *California*, Benjamin F. Crary; *Methodist Advocate*, Erasmus Q. Fuller; *Southwestern*, Joseph C. Hartzell. Missionary Secretaries, John M. Reid, Charles H. Fowler; Church Extension, Alpha J. Kynett; Freedmen's Aid, Richard S. Rust.

After a closing address by Bishop Simpson, the Conference adjourned on May 28th, to meet in the city of Philadelphia, May 1, 1884.

1884.

IN 1884 the General Conference met in Philadelphia, on Thursday, May 1st. The sessions were held in the Young Men's Christian Association Hall. The number of delegates was four hundred and seventeen, of whom one hundred and fifty-six were laymen. During the preceding quadrennium, Bishops E. O. Haven, Levi Scott, and Jesse T. Peck had died. The other bishops were all present, and Bishop Simpson presided during the opening exercises. He was in such feeble health that he was not able to remain; nor did he again occupy the chair during the daily sessions for the transaction of business. David S. Monroe was elected secretary by acclamation, and was granted the privilege of nominating his assistants. The following persons were named, and they were elected: T. S. Bingham, J. N. FitzGerald, C. J. Clark, Sabin Halsey, G. S. Clapp, C. J. Howes, M. S. Hard, W. H. Crogman, and Jacob Wernli.

The Conference was welcomed on behalf of the ministers and citizens of Philadelphia by Andrew Longacre, and on behalf of the commonwealth by Robert E. Pattison, governor of the state. Rules of order were adopted, and the secretaries and Book Agents were authorized to publish the same in a manual, to contain also the list of delegates and reserves, and a general directory of the hosts and places of entertainment of the members, with a diagram of the hall, and other matters usually included in such a manual.

Twelve standing committees were appointed on the usual topics for consideration, and special committees on the Centennial of 1884 and the Ecumenical Conference (to be held, if possible, in 1887); Lay Representation (in the annual conferences, and equal representation in the General Conference); Temperance and Constitutional Prohibition; Co-operation in Church Work; Plan of General Conference Districts; Judiciary; American Bible Society; Nomination of Trustees for Church Institutions; Form of Statistics; Entertainment of Next General Conference; Tenure of Church Property; Recep-

tion of Fraternal Delegates, and Fraternal Correspondence; Expenses of Delegates; Report of Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church and their Treasurer; Rules of Order; To fix Time and Place for Consecration Services; and on Chartered Fund.

The Quadrennial Address of the Bishops was read by Bishop Harris, and the Conference ordered that it be published in the Church papers, and five thousand copies be printed in pamphlet form for gratuitous distribution.

Through the courtesy of Hon. S. D. Waddy, Q. C., London, England, a Bible, the property of John Wesley, was presented to the Methodist Episcopal Church. This Bible was used at the opening service of the General Conference; and a committee, consisting of Bishops Simpson and Harris, Arthur Edwards, and G. G. Reynolds, addressed, by order of the Conference, a letter of thanks to Mr. Waddy for his valuable and interesting gift. The Bible was placed in the hands of the bishops, by them to be sacredly preserved and brought to each succeeding General Conference, to be used in the devotional services and in the consecration of bishops. R. W. Todd, of the Wilmington Conference, sent a bust of John Wesley, belonging to Mrs. Catherine Blake, of North East, Md., for exhibition to the Conference. He had been unable to secure it from the family owning it for the Wilmington Conference Historical Society; and it was placed in the hands of the secretary, to be returned on the next Friday, May 9th. This bust was an original, and was obtained by the owner's grandfather in Baltimore in 1810.

The report of the committee of the first Ecumenical Conference, held in London in 1881, was presented and referred to the Committee on the Centennial of 1884 and the Ecumenical Conference of 1887. This report thus referred recommended the holding of a second Ecumenical Conference in the United States in 1887, and the appointment of an executive committee, to determine the time and place for the same, the number of delegates, and the ratio of their distribution among the various Methodist bodies, to prepare a program of exercises, etc. The committee on this subject approved of the project, and reported favorably.

Memorial services were arranged for and held on Tuesday morning, May 13th, in honor of the deceased bishops and official members of the last General Conference who had died in the interim—George W. Woodruff and Erasmus Q. Fuller. The memoir of Bishop Scott was read by J. B. Quigg; that of Bishop Peck by C. N. Sims, and of Bishop Haven by J. M. Buckley. Memorial notices of Erasmus Q. Fuller and George W. Woodruff were read by J. J. Manker and B. M. Adams, respectively. The memoirs were adopted by a rising vote, and are printed in the Journal.

Fraternal messengers from other religious bodies were received, as follows: Robert Newton Young and Sylvester Whitehead, from the British Wesleyan Conference; Jean Paul Cook, from the Evangelical Methodist Church of France and Switzerland; Charles W. Carter and A. H. Colquitt, from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; Samuel S. Nelles and Isaac B. Aylesworth, from the Methodist Church in Canada; and Jeremiah E. Rankin, from the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States. An address was received and read from the Irish Methodist Conference; and telegrams and greetings came from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Saratoga, N. Y.; the Baptist National Societies, Detroit; from Charles Edward Cheney, the fraternal delegate of the Reformed Episcopal Church, unable to be present; from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Philadelphia; and from the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, McKeesport, Pa.

Reports were made by the fraternal delegates sent by the General Conference: William F. Warren, to the Wesleyan Conferences in England and Ireland; H. B. Ridgaway, to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and W. S. Studley, to the Methodist Church of Canada. Fraternal greetings were sent from the General Conference to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Southern Baptist Church, the Reformed German Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, all of which were holding their sessions.

The Committee on Episcopacy reported in favor of the election of four additional bishops, and their report was adopted. The Conference therefore proceeded to vote for bishops, and on the first ballot there was no election. On the second ballot, William Xavier Ninde and John Morgan Walden were chosen; on the third ballot, Willard Francis Mallalieu; and on the last ballot, Charles Henry Fowler. The committee also recommended the election of a bishop for Africa; and the Conference ordered that one should be elected. When the ballot was taken, William Taylor received two hundred and fifty votes out of three hundred and fifty-three, and was elected. The consecration of the bishops-elect took place on Thursday morning, May 22d.

The other elections in the General Conference resulted as follows: Book Agents, New York, John M. Phillips, Sanford Hunt; Cincinnati, Earl Cranston, William P. Stowe. Editors, *Methodist Review* and Books, Daniel Curry; *Christian Advocate*, James M. Buckley; *Western Christian Advocate*, Jeremiah H. Bayliss; *Northwestern*, Arthur Edwards; *Central*, Benj. St. James Fry; *Pittsburgh*, Charles W. Smith; *Northern*, Orris H. Warren; *California*, Benjamin F. Crary; *Southwestern*, Marshall W. Taylor; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast; *Haus und Herd*, Henry Liebhart; Sunday-school Publications and Books, John H. Vincent. Corresponding Secretaries, Missionary Society, John M. Reid, Charles C. McCabe; Board of Church Extension, Alpha J. Kynett; Freedmen's Aid Society, Richard S. Rust.

The bishops were instructed to submit to the annual conferences, during the year 1887, a proposal to change the ratio of representation from one ministerial delegate for every forty-five members of the annual conference to one for every ninety.

The secretary was instructed to have the Journal of the General Conference printed and bound, and by him certified to be correct; and when so done, the printed copy should be the official Journal. Bishop Harris was appointed to edit the Discipline for this year; and the editors of the *Christliche Apologete* and the *Haus und Herd* were appointed to edit the German translation of the same.

Foreign conferences were granted the same privileges and

rights as those possessed by conferences in the United States. The annual conferences were instructed to direct their educational efforts during the present centennial year to the relief of literary institutions under their care, which are embarrassed by debt, or are inadequately endowed. Surplus files of our Church papers were allowed to be given by the Book Agents to Methodist Historical Societies organized by the conferences, and to our theological seminaries, universities, and colleges, for preservation in their libraries. Certificates of Church membership were made good for only one year from their date, though if a member find it impracticable to present the certificate within that time, the preacher in charge of the Church from which it was received may renew it. A Sunday-school hymnal was ordered, such as would be the most likely to meet the requirements of the Sunday-school, social and religious meetings, and revivals; more books for Sunday-school libraries, under the editorship of the Sunday-school department, were ordered to be published; and it was recommended that the Bible be used in our Sunday-school classes instead of the lesson-books or leaves. A commission, consisting of one from every General Conference District and one at large, was ordered to be appointed, to take into consideration the whole subject of representation, and report to the next General Conference. A commission was also ordered to consider the subject of the consolidation and unifying of our benevolent societies, and report as above. The commission was to consist of one bishop, the representatives of the mission districts in the General Mission Committee, and one secretary from the Missionary, Church Extension, Freedmen's Aid, and Educational Societies. In the licensing of local preachers, the district conferences were directed to inquire of the candidates if they will wholly abstain from the use of tobacco. The quarterly conferences were authorized to organize in every Church an Official Board, to be composed of all the members of the quarterly conference, including all the trustees and Sunday-school superintendents who are members of the Church. The Official Board, so organized, were to discharge the duties belonging to the leaders and stewards' meetings, except certain duties specially assigned to them. The Book Agents

were empowered to provide for the sale and distribution of our publications at Kansas City as soon as judicious arrangements could be made. The rule directing a preacher to take no step toward marriage without first advising with his brethren was stricken out of the Discipline. No divorce, except for the cause of adultery, was to be regarded by the Church as lawful. Ministers were forbidden to marry any parties together where there is a divorced wife or husband living, though this rule was not to apply in the case of an innocent party to the divorce.

The possible number of stewards in a charge was increased from nine to thirteen. The Woman's Home Missionary Society, founded by a number of godly women of the Church in Cincinnati in 1880, was recognized by the Conference. Its Constitution, as well as the Constitution of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, were ordered to be printed with the Journal, and the General Conference was authorized to change or amend these Constitutions. The Managers of the Missionary Society were instructed to consider the importance and advantage of publishing a magazine devoted exclusively to the dissemination of missionary literature; and the bishops were requested to insert in the courses of reading for traveling and local preachers some books on missionary topics.

Library associations were recommended to be formed in every charge, and a form of Constitution was suggested, to be placed in the Appendix to the Discipline. The annual conferences were requested to form historical societies, to collect and preserve all facts, documents, relics, and reminiscences relating to the origin and growth of the Church. As this was the centennial year of the founding of the Church, the pastors were directed to see that an outline history of every charge be prepared, furnishing the date of origin, names of founders and of succeeding leading members, characteristic events, etc., the same to be preserved with the Church records.

A few changes were made in the Discipline; New York City was selected as the place for holding the next session of the Conference; Bishop Simpson made a brief closing address, full of hopefulness for the Church; and the Conference adjourned on Wednesday, May 28th.

1888.

THERE were one hundred and eleven conferences represented in the General Conference of 1888, which met in the city of New York on Tuesday, May 1st. The sessions were held in the Metropolitan Opera House; and there were two hundred and eighty-eight clerical and one hundred and seventy-five lay delegates elected. As soon as the preliminary exercises were concluded, Bishop Bowman read a paper stating that certain persons had been elected as lay delegates which the Church had never recognized as eligible, and for that reason their names had, by the authority of the bishops, been omitted from the roll, which was now about to be called. The bishops, however, had no jurisdiction, he said, in the matter of the eligibility of the persons in question, and the General Conference can only exercise this jurisdiction when duly organized. These delegates-elect can not, therefore, assist in the organization. The persons to whom the bishop alluded were Amanda C. Rippey, Kansas Conference; Mary C. Nind, Minnesota; Angie (Angeline) F. Newman, Nebraska; Lizzie (Elizabeth) D. Van Kirk, Pittsburgh; Frances E. Willard, Rock River; John M. Phillips, Mexico (a non-resident); Robert E. Pattison, North India (non-resident); and John E. Rickards, Montana (irregularly elected). The roll was then called by David S. Monroe, who was immediately elected secretary by acclamation. Sabin Halsey, Charles J. Clark, Manley S. Hard, William H. Crogman, Jacob Wernli, William S. Urmey, A. C. Crosthwaite, and Robert R. Doherty were, upon the secretary's nomination, elected assistants. C. J. Clark died suddenly at 1.15 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, May 6th, and Leavitt Bates, a lay delegate from the New England Southern Conference, died on the same day at 5.45 P. M. Committees were appointed to prepare resolutions expressive of the sympathy of the Conference, which reported on Tuesday morning, May 8th. Bert E. Wheeler, Carlton E. Wilbor and Ernest A. Simons were elected additional secretaries.

Two committees were appointed, on the Eligibility of Women to Sit as Delegates, and on the Eligibility of Non-resident and Other Delegates. The first committee reported that under the Constitution and laws of the Church, as they now are, women are not eligible as lay delegates. The report was adopted by a vote of two hundred and thirty-seven to one hundred and ninety-eight. On motion of James M. Buckley, the expenses of these persons, in coming to, remaining at, and returning to their homes, were ordered to be paid from the funds at the disposal of the General Conference for the expenses of delegates. The Committee on the Eligibility of Other Lay Delegates reported in favor of seating John M. Phillips and Robert E. Pattison; but a minority of the committee reported adversely. The minority report was adopted by a vote of three hundred and three for, to one hundred and sixteen against. The minority of the committee also reported against the seating of J. E. Rickards from Montana, as having been elected by a lay electoral conference called together three months after the regular session of the annual conference; and their report was adopted. His expenses were ordered to be paid up to the date of the report, May 9th.

The Quadrennial Address of the Bishops was read by Bishop Merrill, and was ordered to be published in the *Daily Advocate*, and the official papers, and in the General Conference Manual, to contain names of delegates, etc. The usual standing committees were ordered, and special committees were appointed on Temperance, Consolidation of Church Benevolences, Arranging General Conference Districts, Support of Superannuated Preachers, Judiciary, American Bible Society, Ecumenical Conference, Constitutional Commission, and on other matters as they came up.

During the preceding quadrennium, Bishops Simpson, Wiley, and Harris had died, and Editors Daniel Curry and Marshall W. Taylor. Memorial services were held in their honor on May 16th. Jacob Todd read a memoir of Bishop Simpson, Isaac W. Joyce of Bishop Wiley, and William F. Whitlock of Bishop Harris. Joseph Pullman read a memoir of Daniel Curry, and E. W. S. Hammond of M. W. Taylor. Memorial notices were also read of Daniel D. Whedon by J. M.

Buckley, and of Robert W. C. Farnsworth, elected a delegate to this Conference, by J. B. Green.

Fraternal delegates were received as follows: Charles H. Kelly from the British Conference, and Wesley Guard from the Irish Conference, on Tuesday evening, May 15th; S. A. Steel from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; E. A. Stafford from the Methodist Church in Canada, and J. T. Whiteman from the Maryland Association of Independent Methodist Churches, on Thursday evening, May 17th; and C. T. Shaffer from the African Methodist Episcopal Church, on Wednesday morning, May 30th.

Reports were made by the fraternal messengers sent by this Conference to other religious bodies, as follows: Cyrus D. Foss and Albert S. Hunt, sent to the British Conference and to the Irish Methodist Conference; John Miley, sent to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; Isaac W. Joyce, sent to the General Conference of the Methodist Church in Canada; and from Aristides E. P. Albert, sent to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion General Conference, and Joshua E. Wilson, sent to the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

A fraternal communication was received from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and greetings were sent to and received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and an address from the National Association of Local Preachers.

Much time was given to the discussion of the "woman question," and a number of resolutions were introduced; but the only action taken was that contained in a report from the Committee on the State of the Church. The report was adopted, and it was ordered that in the month of October or November, 1890, the question of the eligibility of women as lay delegates in the electoral and General Conferences should be submitted to a vote of the members of the Church. The ballots were directed to be in the following form: "For the Admission of Women as Lay Delegates," and "Against the Admission of Women as Lay Delegates." The method of taking the vote was then prescribed. Also, to all the annual conferences held in the year 1891 the same proposition should be submitted by the presiding bishops; and the result of both

the lay and clerical vote should be certified to the next General Conference.

The Committee on an Ecumenical Conference, proposed to be held in the United States in the year 1891, reported, recommending the holding of the Conference, adopting the range of subjects presented for consideration by the joint committees of the several Methodist bodies participating, and suggesting that a Committee of Arrangements, to consist of three bishops, five ministers, and five laymen, be appointed by the bishops. The committee also recommended that each annual conference nominate, before July, 1890, two ministers and two laymen for membership to the Ecumenical Conference, and that the Commission on Organization select seven members from each General Conference District from the number of those nominated, and distribute additional members from among those nominated, provided that each annual conference shall not have more than two representatives. The report was adoptetd.

The Committee on Missions, to whom were referred various papers relating to the order of deaconesses, reported in favor of establishing such an order in the Church; and the report was adopted, and the necessary paragraphs relating to deaconesses ordered to be inserted in the Discipline. This class of workers had been employed by our missionaries in Germany with great success, and a successful beginning had recently been made in the same direction in this country. The work was now made official, and deaconesses were authorized to be employed wherever Providence should open the way.

It was resolved that five additional bishops be elected, and a missionary bishop for India. A majority of two-thirds of all the votes cast was made necessary to elect. Sixteen ballots were cast, on the third of which John Heyl Vincent and James Newbury FitzGerald were elected; on the fifth, Isaac Wilson Joyce; on the fourteenth, John Philip Newman; and on the sixteenth, Daniel Ayres Goodsell. For missionary bishop of India and Malaysia James Mills Thoburn was elected. The consecration services were held on Tuesday, May 29th.

The Commission on Ministerial and Lay Representation,

ordered by the General Conference of 1884, reported, recommending that a vote be taken in the annual conferences to change the Restrictive Rule so that the number of lay delegates in every conference shall be equal to the clerical delegates; and, if carried by the requisite vote, the electoral conferences of 1891-92 may elect representatives equal in number with the clerical, and the General Conference of 1892 may provide for their admission. To be eligible for election, a layman must have his residence and Church membership in the bounds of the conference which he is elected to represent, for at least one year prior to the date of his election. The report was adopted.

During this session of the General Conference, a special committee of five was appointed to arrange for services connected with the laying of the corner-stone of the new buildings for the use of the Book Concern and the Missionary Society. The property purchased for this purpose is on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twentieth Street. The time fixed upon by the committee for the ceremony was Wednesday, May 23d, at four o'clock P. M. In the presence of a large congregation, and with the forms prescribed in the Ritual, Bishop Bowman laid the corner-stone in place. The building is a monument of the enterprise and faith of the Church.

The pastoral term of service was increased to five years, and that of presiding elders to six years. Color was declared to be no bar to any right or privilege of office or membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The bishops were requested to prepare a suitable course of reading for class-leaders of the Church, and cause the same to be printed in the Discipline. And they were also requested to prepare an Episcopal Address to class-leaders concerning the gravity and responsibility of their office, to be printed in tract form. A commission was recommended, to be appointed by the bishops, on Church Fraternity and Organic Union, to consist of one bishop, one member of an annual conference, and one layman, to report to the next General Conference. Japanese Methodist Episcopal Missions were authorized, under certain conditions, to unite with other Methodisms in Japan, in order to form one autonomous Methodist Church in that Empire.

The Liberia Conference was authorized to include the whole of Africa within its boundaries, and to be called the Africa Conference; and the missionary bishop of that continent was authorized to continue his efforts to extend the Methodist Episcopal Church in Africa on the plan of self-supporting Missions. Annual conferences were allowed to be formed in South America; and the Portuguese stations in northern Brazil were to be organized into a mission.

A Commission on Education was appointed, to consider the subject of reorganizing the educational work of the Church, to report at the next General Conference. A commission was also appointed on the insurance of Church property, to report as above.

The elections for officials of the General Conference resulted as follows: Book Agents, New York, John M. Phillips, Sandford Hunt; Cincinnati, Earl Cranston, William P. Stowe. Editors, *Christian Advocate*, J. M. Buckley; *Methodist Review*, James W. Mendenhall; *Western Christian Advocate*, J. H. Bayliss; *Northwestern*, Arthur Edwards; *Central*, B. St. J. Fry; *Pittsburgh*, Charles W. Smith; *Northern*, O. H. Warren; *California*, B. F. Crary; *Southwestern*, A. E. P. Albert; *Methodist Advocate* (Atlanta or Chattanooga), T. C. Carter; *Christliche Apologete*, William Nast; *Haus und Herd*, Henry Liebhart; *Sunday-school Advocate* and other Publications, Jesse L. Hurlbut. Secretaries, Missionary Society, C. C. McCabe, Jonas O. Peck, Adna B. Leonard; Board of Church Extension, A. J. Kynett; Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society, Joseph C. Hartzell; Board of Education, Charles H. Payne.

The secretary was directed to edit the Journal for publication; and the printed copy, substantially bound, was ordered to be the official journal. Bishop Merrill was appointed to edit the Discipline for 1888. Omaha was selected as the place for holding the next session of the Conference, and the assembly adjourned on Thursday, May 31st.

1892.

IN 1892 the General Conference met in Omaha, on Monday, May 2d. The sessions were held in the Exposition Hall. There were three hundred and fifteen clerical and one hundred and eighty-nine lay delegates, representing one hundred and thirteen annual conferences. David S. Monroe was elected secretary, and eighteen assistant secretaries were appointed. By a vote of the separate orders, the lay delegates were seated apart from the ministerial.

The usual standing committees were appointed, twelve in number; and special committees on Temperance and Prohibition of the Liquor-traffic, Deaconess Work, Judiciary, Epworth League, Equal Ministerial and Lay Representation, General Conference Districts, Columbian Exposition, American Bible Society, and minor topics.

The quadrennial Address of the Bishops was read by Bishop Foster, and the subjects spoken of properly distributed among the committees. It was ordered that it be printed in the *Daily Advocate* and other official papers, and that an edition of three thousand copies be printed in pamphlet form. Bishops Thoburn and Taylor made reports of their work, both of which reports were ordered to be printed in the *Daily Advocate*, and that of the former to be printed in pamphlet form, two thousand copies, for distribution among our academies, seminaries, and colleges.

The secretary was instructed to tabulate and print in the *Daily Advocate* the votes taken during the last quadrennium by order of the General Conference; namely, the vote of the annual conferences and the membership on the eligibility of women to the electoral and General Conferences; the vote of the annual conferences on the proposed change of the Restrictive Rule, so as to admit women, and on the ratio of representation, and also the vote on the Philadelphia proposition. The summary of lay votes showed that 235,668 voted for the eligibility of women, and 163,843 against their eligibility. The ministerial vote was 5,634 in favor and 4,717 against the ad-

mission of women as delegates; so the necessary majority of votes was not given for any one of these changes.

The use of the hall where the Conference met was granted to Rev. Samuel A. Keen every afternoon from four to five o'clock, when not required for other purposes, for the holding of special evangelistic services. Mr. Keen's meetings were attended with great spiritual power, and much good resulted from them.

This being the centennial year of the General Conference, the first Conference being held in 1792, it was deemed fitting to celebrate its organization and work; and it was therefore resolved that such a celebration be held on Tuesday evening, May 17th, with appropriate addresses and other exercises. The Book Agents at Cincinnati were instructed to engage the services of some competent person to collect and arrange the data for a "Reproduced Journal of the General Conference of 1792," from whatever sources of information were possible to be collated. The same was ordered to be published in a size uniform with that of the Journals of the General Conference. This reproduced journal appears in the present volume. It is also printed separately.

Though the General Conference had previously expressed its sympathy with the American Bible Society, and directed that collections should be made in its behalf in all our congregations, it again gave it a special indorsement. By reason of its undenominational character and its indispensable aid in foreign mission work, the Conference urged on all our preachers the duty of laying more especial emphasis upon the importance of the collection for the society, and on our people the duty of making more liberal contributions in support of its great enterprise.

The Committee on the Entertainment of the General Conference and Expenses of Fraternal Delegates, Judicial Conferences, etc., reported the gross sum collected for this purpose to be $38,971.82, and the entire amount necessary to defray expenses to be $39,831.52. The deficiency, $879.70, was ordered to be borrowed from the Book Concern.

Fraternal letters and representatives from other Churches were received as follows: From the British Conference, Will-

iam F. Moulton; from the Methodist Church in Ireland, an address; from the Methodist Church of Canada, Albert Carman; from the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, E. Cottrell; from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, John J. Tigert; From the Independent Methodist Churches (of Baltimore), Charles J. Baker; from the United Brethren in Christ, W. M. Beardshear; from the African Methodist Episcopal Church, J. T. Jenifer; and from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, William H. Goler. Telegrams were received, containing fraternal greetings from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in session at Portland, Oregon, and from the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, in session at Westminster, Md.

Reports were made by the fraternal delegates sent by the General Conference to the British and Irish Methodist Conferences, H. W. Warren and Charles J. Little; by the delegate sent to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, F. M. Bristol; and by the delegate sent to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Joshua E. Wilson.

The bishops were requested to provide for a biennial visitation to the South American conferences, and were authorized to appoint pastors from our Church to any Methodist Church not under our care, having the same doctrines and usages, and co-operating with us in our benevolent work, when so requested. Detroit and the state of Washington were made episcopal residences.

The Conference authorized the *Rocky Mountain Christian Advocate* to be published at Denver in behalf of the Church, and appointed a commission for this purpose, with the proviso that neither the Church nor the Book Concern should be involved in any financial responsibility or loss. The *Sunday-school Advocate* was made a weekly paper, the *Classmate* doubled in size, and the *Picture Lesson Paper* ordered to be printed in colors. A commission was appointed to publish in behalf of the Church at Omaha the *Nebraska Christian Advocate*, on condition that the Church or the Book Concern should not be involved in any financial responsibility or loss.

Memorial services were held in commemoration of John M. Phillips, Book Agent in New York, who died January 15, 1889;

Jeremiah H. Bayliss, Editor of the *Western Christian Advocate*, who died August 14, 1889; Benjamin St. James Fry, Editor of the *Central Christian Advocate*, who died February 5, 1892; and of several members of the General Conferences of 1888 and 1892, who died before May 1, 1892. Only the memoirs of Mr. Phillips, by Sandford Hunt; of Dr. Bayliss, by Adna B. Leonard, and of Dr. Fry, by Arthur Edwards, were ordered to be incorporated in the Journal.

The commission appointed by the General Conference of 1888 on the Church Constitution, made its report; and, after it was discussed, and various amendments proposed, it was finally postponed, with instructions to have the report published in the papers of the Church, and presented to the next General Conference.

Some question had arisen concerning the function of the bishops in the election of an editor or publishing agent by the Book Committee, and whether they might take part in the deliberations of the committee. The matter was brought to the notice of the General Conference, and referred to the Committee on Judiciary. After proper consideration, the committee reported that the general superintendents are not present as a part of a joint committee, nor for the purpose of joint action in any particular with the Book Committee; but they are present as a separate body, to hear the actions of the Book Committee; and their only function is to concur or refuse to concur in that action. They may take part in any action had by the Book Committee only by virtue of its request or permission. The report was adopted, and the relation of the bishops to the committee defined.

The declaration of the Conference on the subject of temperance was clear and explicit. While not dictating to the members of the Church their political action, they record it as their deliberate judgment that no political party ought to receive or expect the support of Christian men so long as it stands committed to the license policy or refuses to put itself on record in an attitude of open hostility to the saloon and the liquor interests.

The Conference recommended to the annual conferences a change in the organic law of the General Confer-

ence, by which there might be an equal number of clerical and lay delegates elected to each General Conference. It was enacted that, if the General Conference should, by a two-thirds vote, agree to this change, and it should receive the necessary three-fourths vote of the members of the annual conferences, then the several electoral conferences of 1895-96 might elect representatives in equal numbers with the ministerial, and the General Conference of 1896 might provide for their admission.

It was also recommended to the annual conferences to change the ratio of representation, so as to read in the Rule on the subject (Discipline, ¶ 63, § 2, line 4), "Not more than one for every forty-five, nor less than one for every ninety."

The secretary was directed to send to the secretaries of the several annual conferences blank forms for certificates of the votes cast in the respective conferences on these proposed changes, so that the result could easily be ascertained and reported to the next General Conference.

Resolutions were passed, expressive of the hearty approval of the Conference of the general purposes of the proposed Columbian Exposition, and an emphatic protest against opening its gates on Sunday.

The Commission on Education, appointed by the last General Conference, reported a paragraph to take the place of the chapter on education in the Discipline of 1888. The intention was to give more unity, breadth, and effectiveness to the educational work of the Church. The report was adopted, and the proposed substitution was placed in the Discipline.

The Epworth League, which was a combination of five separate societies of young people, was organized at Cleveland, O., in 1889, and Jesse L. Hurlbut was elected its corresponding secretary. The General Conference adopted the League, and gave it a Constitution, vesting its management in a Board of Control, and determining its officers. It also established a paper expressly for the benefit of the members of the League, named the *Epworth Herald*. The president of an Epworth League Chapter, if confirmed by the quarterly conference, becomes a member of that conference. The central office of the League was fixed at Chicago.

The admission of women as lay delegates was still an open question; and those who favored it moved that the matter be referred to the Committee on Judiciary, with instructions to report as soon as practicable. The report stated that under the well-recognized rule of construction the intent of the lawmakers in using the words "lay delegates," "laymen," and "members of the Church in full connection," in paragraphs 55 to 63, inclusive, in the Discipline, was not to apply them to both sexes, but to men only. For this report a substitute was offered by David H. Moore, to which an amendment was offered by J. W. Hamilton, dissenting from the report of the Judiciary Committee, and referring the question again to the annual conferences and to the membership. Dr. Hamilton's amendment was accepted, and the substitute was adopted. It was thus

"*Resolved*, 1. That we submit to the annual conferences the proposition to amend the Second Restrictive Rule, by adding the words, 'and said delegates must be male members' after the words, 'two lay delegates for an annual conference,' so that it will read 'nor of more than two lay delegates for an annual conference, and said delegates must be male members.'

"2. That this proposition be submitted to the annual conferences during the autumn of 1895 and the spring of 1896.

"3. That in the month of October or November, 1894, there shall be held in every place of public worship of the Methodist Episcopal Church an election, at which every member in full connection who is not less than twenty-one years of age shall be permitted to vote upon the following proposition: 'Shall the Second Restrictive Rule be amended by adding the words *and said delegates must be male members* after the words 'two lay delegates for an annual conference,' so that it will read 'nor of more than two lay delegates for an annual conference, and said delegates must be male members.' "

The fourth resolution prescribed the method of taking this vote, and the manner of reporting the result of the election; and the fifth resolution reads as follows:

"5. That if the amendment so submitted does not receive the votes of three-fourths of the members of the annual conferences and two-thirds of the General Conference, the Second Restrictive Rule shall be so construed that the words 'lay delegates' may include men and women, and thus be in harmony with the legislation of previous General Conferences."

The American University, located at Washington, D. C., was approved by the Conference, and the patronage of the same, according to the terms of its charter, was accepted. The Board of Trustees named in the charter was approved. A resolution was adopted, reciting the debasing and ruinous effects of opium-smoking, and requesting Congress to devise measures to suppress the evil, by prohibiting the importation and sale of opium-smoking extract under heavy penalties. The American Sabbath Union, organized for the protection of the Christian Sabbath as a day of rest and worship, was heartily indorsed. Mob law, lynchings, and other outrages against humanity were denounced, and the State Legislatures and Congress called upon to enact just laws against them, and see that they are enforced. A University Senate was authorized, to be composed of practical educators, for the purpose of determining the minimum equivalent of academic work in our Church institutions for graduation to the Baccalaureate degree. This action was designed to place all our colleges in the same grade. Post-graduate courses of study were commended. Two secretaries for the Church Extension Board, and two for the Freedmen's Aid Society were ordered to be elected. A commission of not less than three nor more than seven laymen was ordered, to be appointed by the bishops, to originate and operate a Church Insurance Company, under certain limitations. The name Book Agents for the Methodist Book Concern was changed to Publishing Agents. Bishop Andrews was appointed to edit the Discipline, and a committee, consisting of Bishop Foss, the Editor of Books at New York, the Editor of the *Christian Advocate*, John Miley, and the Agents of the Book Concern in New York, were appointed to revise it, under certain restrictions, and to authorize a reconstruction and enlargement of the historical introduction, but not to exceed four pages in length.

The General Conference received invitations to meet in three or four different places in 1896; but as no representatives from either place were authorized to make the necessary guarantees as to hotel prices and railroad accommodations, it was resolved that the whole matter of arrangements and entertain-

ment of the next General Conference be referred, with power to act, to the Book Committee.

The official elections in the General Conference were as follows: Publishing Agents, New York, Sandford Hunt, Homer Eaton; Cincinnati, Earl Cranston, Lewis Curts. Editors, *Methodist Review*, James W. Mendenhall; *Christian Advocate*, James M. Buckley; Sunday-school Publications, Jesse L. Hurlbut; *Northern Christian Advocate*, James E. C. Sawyer; *Pittsburgh*, Charles W. Smith; *Western*, David H. Moore; *Northwestern*, Arthur Edwards; *Central*, Jesse Bowman Young; *California*, Benjamin F. Crary; *Southwestern*, Edward W. S. Hammond; *Christliche Apologete*, Albert J. Nast; *Haus und Herd*, Henry Liebhart. Corresponding Secretaries, Missionary Society, Charles C. McCabe, Jonas O. Peck, Adna B. Leonard; Church Extension, William A. Spencer, Alpha J. Kynett; Freedmen's Aid, Joseph C. Hartzell, John W. Hamilton; Education, Charles H. Payne.

On Thursday, May 26th, the Conference adjourned *sine die.*

1896.

THIS year the General Conference convened in the Armory building, in the city of Cleveland, on Friday, May 1st. There were five hundred and thirty-eight delegates, of whom three hundred and thirty-eight were clerical and two hundred lay. One hundred and twenty-two conferences were represented. All the bishops, including the missionary bishops, were present. David S. Monroe was elected secretary.

The first action of the Conference was the reception of a protest, signed by James M. Buckley and others, against the admission of certain women, elected delegates by several of the lay electoral conferences, whose names appeared on the roll. A committee on their eligibility, consisting of one minister and one layman from each General Conference District, and three at large, was appointed, to report on Monday morning, May 4th, at ten o'clock.

Standing committees, to consist of one member from each delegation, were ordered on Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, Revisals, Temporal Economy, State of the Church, Book Concern, Temperance and the Prohibition of the Liquor-traffic, Missions, Education, Church Extension, Sunday-schools and Tracts, Freedmen's Aid and Work in the South, and Epworth League. Special committees were appointed on Judiciary, Constitution, Consolidation of Benevolences, Fraternal Delegates, American Bible Society, Memorials, Rules of Order, Acknowledging the Reception tendered to the General Conference, and on minor matters.

The Address of the bishops was read by Bishop Warren, and thirty-five hundred copies were ordered to be printed in pamphlet form, and in all the Church papers. The various subjects treated of were referred to the appropriate committees. A manual of the General Conference, called "Agenda," was prepared and published for the use of the members.

Resolutions favoring the arbitration of international differences were passed, and the presiding officers and secretary were requested to send a copy to the President of the United States.

The Committee on the Eligibility of Women as delegates to the General Conference submitted majority and minority reports, on May 4th. The former was signed by twenty members of the committee, and the latter by eleven. The majority declare that, having carefully considered the challenge of the eligibility of Lydia A. Trimble, delegate-elect from the Foochow Electoral Conference; Lois S. Parker and Ada C. Butcher, delegates-elect from the North India Electoral Conference; and of Jane Field Bashford, delegate-elect from the Ohio Electoral Conference, the challenge is not sustained, and the aforesaid lady delegates-elect are not ineligible to seats in this body. The minority of the committee say that, after reviewing the action of the General Conferences since 1872, when laymen were first admitted as representatives in this assembly, the challenge of the eligibility of the women, whose names appear above, is sustained, that the election of women by lay electoral conferences is illegal, and that to seat the claimants would tend to destroy all respect for the Constitution of the Church, and for the decisions and interpretations of the General Conference.

Prior to the presentation of these reports, the secretary read a communication from Jane F. Bashford, Lois S. Parker, and Ada C. Butcher, lay delegates-elect, expressing their appreciation of the courtesy shown them, but relinquishing for the sake of peace all claims to membership in this body. They do not waive the claims of women to sit as delegates in future General Conferences, and believe that this present decision on their part will best secure their interests, and, in the providence of God, a more abundant entrance to those who shall come after them. Miss Lydia A. Trimble, lay delegate-elect from the Foochow Electoral Conference, came into Cleveland after the withdrawal of the other women delegates, and learning what had been done, also waived her claims to a seat, and withdrew.

Both the reports of the Committee on Eligibility were, on motion, recommitted, with instructions to find, if possible, a common ground of agreement, and report after reading the Journal on May 7th.

The committee reported that the question of eligibility is a constitutional question, and that the General Conference has full power, in its judicial capacity, to interpret the Constitu-

tion, the question being raised on a case which properly invokes the judicial function. The terms used in ¶ 62 of the Discipline are such as to admit of serious doubt, and raise questions on which the committee could not agree. They recommend that no formal decision of the question be made at this time; but as the challenge had not been judicially passed upon, those occupying the seats in question do so under a title in dispute, yet without prejudice to the rights of either challengers or challenged, and without establishing a precedent. The committee further proposed an amendment to the Second Restrictive Rule, so that it should read as follows:

"§ 2. The General Conference shall not allow of more than one ministerial representative for every fourteen members of an annual conference, nor of a less number than one for every forty-five, nor of more than two lay delegates for any annual conference; *provided*, that no person shall be chosen a delegate to the General Conference or to an electoral conference who shall be under twenty-five years of age, or who shall not have been a member of the Church in full connection for the five consecutive years preceding the election; and *provided*, also, that no conference shall be denied the privilege of one ministerial and one lay delegate; *provided*, nevertheless, that where there shall be in any conference a fraction of two-thirds the number which shall be fixed for the ratio of representation, such conference shall be entitled to an additional delegate for such fraction."

The bishops were instructed to submit this alteration to the annual conferences at their first sessions following the adjournment of the General Conference.

Word was received and reported to the Conference of the serious illness, and later of the death of John M. Reid, honorary secretary of the Missionary Society. An appropriate minute was adopted for entry upon the Journal, and the secretaries of the Missionary Society were requested to prepare a memoir, to be published with the Journal. The memoir was not printed in the Journal; but the official journals of the Church gave full accounts of the life, services, and death of this honored man of God.

Fraternal delegates were received and introduced from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (J. C. Morris and E. B. Perkins); from the British Wesleyan Conference (W. L. Wat-

kinson); from the Irish Conference (R. C. Johnson); from the Canada Methodist Church (J. J. Lathern); from the African Methodist Episcopal Church (J. A. Johnson); from the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (C. H. Phillips); from the Reformed Episcopal Church (B. T. Noakes); from the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand (John J. Lewis); and from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (J. T. Gaskill). All of these representatives made appropriate addresses before the Conference. Fraternal greetings were sent to and received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., and the Methodist Protestant General Conference, at Kansas City, Kan. Greetings were also sent to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, in session at Mobile, Ala. The general officers of the Woman's Foreign and Woman's Home Missionary Societies, in attendance as visitors, were presented to the Conference, and invited to seats on the platform.

Reports were presented by the fraternal delegates sent from this General Conference to other religious bodies, as follows: By James H. Potts, sent to the Methodist Church of Canada; John F. Goucher and Henry Wade Rogers, sent to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and by J. W. E. Bowen, sent to the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The question of equal representation of the ministers and laymen in the General Conference was ordered to be submitted to a vote in the annual conferences. If the conferences shall determine that an equal number of lay representatives may be elected with the clerical, then the electoral conferences may elect in 1899 and 1900 representatives equal in number with the clerical, and the General Conference of 1900 may by a two-thirds vote provide for their admission.

The organic union of other religious bodies with the Methodist Episcopal Church was sanctioned, under certain specified conditions, so that both ministers and members should be received and recognized as such in full communion. The insurance plan of the West Wisconsin Conference was approved, and the organization of a Mutual Church Insurance Company was provided for by the General Conference, on the principles and method laid down in the Appendix to the Discipline of 1896.

Bishops Bowman and Foster were retired from the effective list of bishops, and relieved of all episcopal functions, and Missionary Bishop Taylor was also retired as non-effective. The Conference determined that the episcopacy should be strengthened by the election of two bishops, and that a missionary bishop should be elected for Africa. The election was held, beginning May 15th, and resulted as follows, two-thirds of all the votes cast being necessary to elect: On the fifteenth ballot, Charles Cardwell McCabe received 344 ballots, and was elected, and on the sixteenth ballot Earl Cranston had 366 votes, and was elected. Joseph Crane Hartzell was elected Missionary Bishop for Africa. He had already been elected secretary of the Freedmen's Aid Society; but when elected to the missionary episcopate, he resigned that office. The consecration ceremonies took place on Tuesday, May 26th.

Memorial services were held on May 15th and 16th, in honor of the General Conference officers who had died during the quadrennium—James W. Mendenhall, June 18, 1892; Jonas O. Peck, May 17, 1894; Sandford Hunt, February 10, 1896; Henry Liebhart, January 26, 1895; Benjamin F. Crary, March 16, 1895. The memoir of J. W. Mendenhall was read by William F. Whitlock; of J. O. Peck by George E. Reed; of S. Hunt by Homer Eaton; of H. Liebhart by Albert J. Nast; and of B. F. Crary by John Coyle.

The days upon which the several standing committees should meet were determined; and it was ordered that on the day following the election of delegates from an annual conference, the chairman of the delegation (the member receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot that elects) shall furnish the secretary of the last General Conference the names of the several standing committees, as chosen by the members of his delegation. From these returns the secretary shall construct, so far as possible, the rolls of the standing committees in advance of the session of the ensuing General Conference. This order is printed in the Appendix to the Discipline.

A plan for seating the next General Conference was adopted, and ordered to be printed in the Appendix to the Discipline. This plan is intended to facilitate the seating of the delegates, and save time in the selection of places for the several delegations.

The elections in the Conference resulted as follows: Publishing Agents, New York, Homer Eaton, George P. Mains; Cincinnati, Lewis Curts, Henry C. Jennings; Editors, *Methodist Review*, William V. Kelley; *Christian Advocate*, J. M. Buckley; Sunday-school Publications, Jesse L. Hurlbut; *Northern Christian Advocate*, James E. C. Sawyer; *Pittsburgh*, Charles W. Smith; *Western*, D. H. Moore; *Northwestern*, Arthur Edwards; *Central*, Jesse B. Young; *California*, Winfield S. Matthew; *Southwestern*, Isaiah B. Scott; *Epworth Herald*, Joseph F. Berry; *Christliche Apologete*, A. J. Nast; *Haus und Herd*, Franz L. Nagler. Corresponding Secretaries, Missionary Society, Adna B. Leonard, Abraham J. Palmer, William T. Smith; Church Extension, Alpha J. Kynett, William A. Spencer; Freedmen's Aid, John W. Hamilton, Madison C. B. Mason (in place of J. C. Hartzell, resigned); Education, Charles H. Payne.

The Committee of Arrangements for the General Conference of 1900 was instructed to appoint three of its number as a subcommittee on fraternal delegates, to correspond with them and arrange for their entertainment. A communication on the subject of Methodist Confederation was received from the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and referred to the Board of Bishops. The secretary of the Conference was made the custodian of all the papers and the Journal belonging to it, to deliver the same to his successor, and to make a roll of the ensuing General Conference—this duty, in the case of his death, to be performed by the assistant secretaries, in the order of their appointment. The Conference passed resolutions favoring the bill pending in Congress, prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in the Capitol buildings, and asking for the passage of a law prohibiting the issuing of permits by the Government for the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage in those States where such sale is prohibited by law. The Conference recommended the giving of instruction relating to the physiological effects of alcohol and other narcotics, in all the literary institutions, Sunday-schools, and mission schools of the Church, and approved of the object of the American Anti-saloon League.

The Book Committee was instructed to take under advisement the diminution in number of the official papers of the

Church, and report to the General Conference of 1900. The committee was authorized to elect a general book editor, upon the recommendation of the Publishing Agents, and to discontinue any depository or periodical when the interests of the Church or the Book Concern demand it. A book depository was authorized to be established in Detroit, Mich., and the committee was directed to make careful investigation of all the facts in connection with each place asking for the General Conference of 1900, and to determine which place shall be selected, with power to make all the arrangements connected therewith, as to entertainment, expenses of delegates, etc.

To official boards was given all the duties heretofore belonging exclusively to the leaders and stewards' meeting. The chapters relating to deaconesses and conference claimants were changed, and the bishops were requested to prepare a form for the consecration of deaconesses. The Conference allowed this form to be inserted in the Appendix to the Discipline, as it was not ready in time for their approval by vote. Resolutions of sympathy for the insurgents in Cuba, struggling for freedom, and for the Armenian Christians, suffering from religious persecution by the Turks, were passed, and asking the General Government to discontinue appropriating funds for sectarian schools. A new order for public worship was arranged, to be printed with the Church hymnal, and also in such form that it may be obtained separately by Churches already supplied with hymnals and pasted in every copy. The action of the state of Florida, forbidding white persons and Negroes to be taught in the same schools, was deprecated, and any efforts to test the constitutionality of the law in the civil courts or secure its repeal were approved.

Pastors of charges were forbidden to engage an evangelist other than those appointed by the bishops of their conference, without first obtaining the consent of their presiding elders. Against this action a strong protest was presented, to be entered on the Journal of the Conference, signed by forty-seven members, on the ground that it involves an unjustifiable restriction of pastoral prerogative. The General Committee of the Missionary Society was forbidden to appropriate more for a given year than the total income of the society for the year

immediately preceding. This rule was ordered to be inserted in its proper place in the Constitution of the Missionary Society. The bishops were requested to appoint a committee, to consist of six laymen, six ministers, and three general superintendents, to review the work of the Constitutional Commission of 1888, the recommendations of the committee appointed by the General Conference of 1896, and the recommendations of all General Conference Committees on Lay Representation; also, to consider with care any memorials that may be addressed to the new committee over the signature of any five ministers or laymen of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and to report, first, a draft which shall set forth, in well-defined terms and in logically-arranged articles, the existing organic law of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and, secondly, any modifications of said organic law which the new committee may recommend for adoption by the concurrent action of the General Conference and the members of the annual conferences. It was made the duty of the new committee to present its report to the Church papers as early as January, 1899, and after revising it between January 1 and May 1, 1900, in the light of all discussions and announcements then available, to present it in its final form to the General Conference of 1900. The committee, as appointed, consists of W. F. Warren, J. M. King, R. D. Munger, E. J. Gray, F. G. Mitchell, R. J. Cooke, W. H. Shier, F. M. Bristol, Robert Forbes, J. B. Maxfield, J. T. McFarland, J. W. Jackson, Jacob Rothweiler, G. M. Booth, ministers; and David Gordon, J. F. Rusling, J. L. Romer, J. E. James, R. T. Miller, E. J. Sawyer, R. S. Tennant, L. M. Shaw, Leander Ferguson, J. H. Mickey, James Allison, A. L. Billups, Henry Bendixen, Henry French, laymen, representing the fourteen General Conference Districts; and J. M. Buckley, T. B. Neely, and J. F. Goucher, at large, and Bishops S. M. Merrill, C. D. Foss, and W. X. Ninde.

The time of the meeting of the General Conference was changed from the first day of May to the first Wednesday of May, the change being referred to the annual conferences for approval.

A committee, consisting of Bishop Andrews, S. L. Baldwin, J. M. King, J. M. Buckley, H. A. Buttz, and W. V. Kelley, was

appointed to index and rearrange the Discipline, and Bishop Andrews was appointed to edit it.

A few minor changes were made in the Discipline, and the Conference adjourned on Thursday, May 28th.

In reading this condensed account of the action of the General Conference for the century just ending, two things will be apparent: First, that the Church has always been ready to adopt new measures of polity when circumstances, or the conditions of society, demanded; and, secondly, that its spiritual interests have continually been made prominent. While no new doctrine has been introduced, and the standards of the Wesleyan theology have been maintained in their integrity, certain of the general rules of the Church have received a wider application, such as those on slavery, temperance, needless self-indulgence, and amusements. No new tests for membership have been imposed, and the rights of both the ministry and the laity have been jealously guarded. In the case of erring members every effort to save them for this life and for that which is to come has been made. From the first the entire legislation, and the prudential measures adopted, have aimed at presenting to Christ as his bride "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing," and this, not only in outward adornment, but making her like "the King's daughter, all glorious within."

The Methodist Church from small beginnings has grown into wealth and influence. Once it was everywhere spoken against; now it has favor and acceptance. Let it never forget or desert its fundamental principle, that it was intended to be, and is, a teacher of holiness, and that its existence depends upon its possessing the revival spirit, the baptism of fire which came upon the first disciples on the day of Pentecost!

PART II.

TOPICAL.

CHAPTER I.

THE MINISTRY.

A CONTINUOUS narrative of the work of the twenty-seven quadrennial sessions of the Great Methodist Legislature does not admit of a topical grouping of subjects. In order to furnish this greatly desirable feature of a history of the General Conference the following pages have been prepared, which, it is believed, will be valuable for reference by those who desire to trace its action on any given subject.

GENESIS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The Methodist Episcopal Church abounds in conferences. For this fact two reasons may be given: First. Its aggressive mission calls for the most thorough organization, of which a large, prompt, and constant supervision is required. Second. The spirit of its ministry is so cordial and fraternal that frequent gatherings not only add to its efficiency, but are also essential to its comfort.

The first Methodist Conference was merely a private reception given by John Wesley to a few of his "helpers," whose views on certain questions he thought worth the asking. But his condescending grace so soon came to be abused that he was obliged sharply to remind them that they were not a "body" at all, but merely a handful of men whom he had felt inclined to call in "to advise, not to govern," him.

Quite different from all this was the first Methodist Conference in America. It was held inside of a partly-finished, barn-like structure, originally intended for a German church; but which afterwards passed into Methodist hands to become the memorable edifice in Philadelphia long known as "Old St. George's." The Methodists apparently bought the name of the church along with the shell.

The date of the meeting was July 14, 1773. There were ten men present, all from Great Britain, the same number that composed Mr. Wesley's first conference in London,

twenty-nine years before. Their names were: Thomas Rankin, Richard Boardman, Joseph Pillmoor, Francis Asbury, Richard Wright, George Shadford, Thomas Webb, John King, Abraham Whitworth and Joseph Yearby. Rankin is in the chair. He has been sent out by Mr. Wesley to be his "General Assistant" in the New World. He would like to be the American edition of his great chief; but the soil and climate of the country are not favorable to such pretensions. He holds himself a little above them; but among the other preachers there is a delightful spirit of fraternity.

Everything here goes by majority vote; though they all vote to submit to the authority (not of Rankin, but) of Wesley. There are ten preachers and 1,170 members in "society." After two days of hearty Christian fellowship they strike out for their new fields, stronger and happier for the Conference. The Conference is their *Magna Charta*. In it they have rights which even John Wesley must respect.

As the Methodist area increased, local or district conferences were held for convenience.

In the "Minutes of some Conversations between the Preachers in Connection with the Rev. Mr. John Wesley," for the year 1783, question eighteen is as follows:

> **"When and where shall our next Conference be held?**
> **"*Ans.* In Baltimore, the 4th Tuesday in May."**

In the "Minutes" for 1784 the same question, in plural form, occurs:

> **"When and where shall our next Conferences be held?**
> **"*Ans.* The first at Green Hill's, North Carolina, Friday, 29th, and Saturday, 30th of April; the second in Virginia, at Conference Chapel, May 8th; the third in Maryland, Baltimore, the 15th day of June."**

Thenceforward, on account of the rapid extension of the range of the itinerants, the present system of annual conferences has been continued. Thus, in 1787, six conferences were appointed; in 1788, eleven; and in 1790, thirteen.

In the "Minutes" for 1792 another change occurs. The annual conferences had been regarded as parts of one body, merely divided for convenience, the unity of which was kept up by

the bishops. But as the reference of the action of one conference to another, which sometimes came to be needful, was found to be inconvenient, it was determined to hold one General Conference annually of all the preachers, or as many as could be assembled; which Conference was first held at the old Light Street Church in Baltimore in the month of September, 1792. No less than twenty annual conferences were also held during that Conference year, which was reckoned from November, 1792, to October, 1793. The Christmas Conference held in Baltimore, beginning December 24, 1784, opened a new era in Methodism. Thenceforward it was to be, not a cluster of "societies," but a Church. Of the great events which marked that memorable occasion some account will be given under the topic of "Episcopacy." At this point the question arises as to the status of that assembly. There is a difference of opinion as to whether or not it should be set down as a General Conference; though about sixty out of a total of eighty-four preachers were present, and the business transacted was of a character so general that it has furnished the basis and much of the law of the whole Church from that day to this. Asbury's Journal calls it a "Convention;" doubtless because it was not the regularly-appointed annual gathering of all the preachers, which had then become an established custom.

It is difficult at this distance of time, and under this difference of conditions, to conceive of the Methodist situation in America as it existed prior to 1784. There must have been a crudeness about it which would now be quite shocking, but that nearness to nature was a great help to the preachers, most of whom were but little superior in education to their hearers. The scattered sheep in the forest were so glad to have a spiritual shepherd that they were not over-particular as to his "gifts," any more than as to churchly forms and surroundings. Perhaps it was better that the most of the itinerants, whose mission was to find and save rude people, should have been nearly on a level with their congregations.

In the conception of the early Methodists a minister was, next to the King of England, and later on next to the President of the United States, the greatest character in the world. It was an honor to have him come under their leaky roof, to have

him eat at their rough table, and to make him a rude bed on their cabin floor. Obedience to "the Church" and its representatives had been a part of their religion in the old country, and it was easy for them to transfer their allegiance to the men who, in the new country, were taking so much pains to help them save their souls. Thus, without question, the power of the ministry in all spiritual affairs was supreme.

If one minister was impressive, what must a whole conference have been! In the early history of American Methodism, so far as government was concerned, the ministers were the Church. There was, indeed, a party of Virginians, under the lead of O'Kelly, who claimed to be republican in religion as well as in politics; but perhaps more attention has been paid to them than the importance of their movement deserves. With the great majority of early Methodists, especially those who had emigrated from England, Germany, and Holland, obedience to the clergy was as much an instinct as was obedience to the king. The preachers were thus masters of the situation, and such they continued to be for more than fifty years.

But there was one respect in which they felt themselves at a disadvantage. They were not "in regular orders;" and without a "regular" ordination the sacraments were not held to be valid at their hands. Of course there was no reason for this sense of inferiority, except what had been impressed upon their minds and consciences by Mr. Wesley; in whom, during the early portion of his life, there was more of the traditions of the Established Church than was good for him. It was he who had taught all his assistants and helpers that it was an ecclesiastical crime for an unordained preacher to presume to perform the office of baptism, or to celebrate the Lord's Supper; and these men were, most of them, proud to be his obedient son in the gospel. Previous to the Conference of 1784 nearly all the itinerants were under the autocracy of John Wesley, and nearly up to that time he himself had been under the domination of the Book of Common Prayer.

But a war of revolution had been going on in his mind. He had discovered the New Testament view of ministerial orders, and now he was about to send out to his impatient people in America that priceless gift, that invisible but no

less awful power and prerogative, to wit, a "regular ordination;" a true form of "Apostolic Succession." And it was quite time that this should be done. The existence of a body of Methodists in Virginia whose preachers, at the importunity of their people, had ordained each other in order that their congregations should no longer be deprived of the ordinances of the gospel, showed that the Anglicanism of one man would not much longer be allowed to stand between the flock of Christ and the rights and privileges conveyed to them by the Chief Shepherd himself. But Wesley had been divinely lifted out of the bondage of churchly tradition, and was now about to take his stand as a leader of the Lord's host. Such was the momentous message which Freeborn Garrettson was charged to convey with all speed to all the preachers within reach, on the appearance of the envoy of Mr. Wesley in America. To this call, in an incredibly short space of time, nearly three-fourths of the American Methodist ministry responded.

The chief interest on this memorable occasion centers around two great personages; the Rev. Thomas Coke, D. C. L., and plain Brother Francis Asbury. The first of these was Mr. Wesley's envoy extraordinary, who was charged with the momentous mission of setting up a semi-Anglican and wholly apostolic order of ministry for the Methodists in America. The other was a transformed as well as a transported English Methodist preacher; a man of the people, in whom nature and grace had made ample compensation for lack of scholastic learning and churchly orders and degrees.

No better choice of an envoy could have been made. The autocrat of all the Methodists sent, as his official representative, to his willing subjects in the New World, the foremost man in all his spiritual realm. He was of a highly respectable family. He was a graduate of the University of Oxford. He was a doctor of civil law. He was a presbyter of the Established Church of England. From that day to this no Methodist preacher has ever carried such a combination of powers and honors. It was through this fittest medium that the orders of deacon and elder were to be transmitted from that man who had proved his right to hold and give them. And then, besides there was that other ministerial degree to

be conferred, viz., the General Superintendency over all the Methodists in America.

All this, and much besides, was duly celebrated and performed at the Christmas Conference—a very "General" Conference, to say the least—and upon the basis of the facts here recited stands the visible succession from Christ and his apostles, of all the thousands of deacons, elders, and general superintendents, or bishops, in both sections of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

To any who object, in view of these facts, that the Methodist clergy is not in "regular orders," it may be replied: It is not to the Anglicanism of John Wesley that Episcopal Methodism refers for the apostolic basis of its succession, but to the manifest baptism of the Holy Ghost that was upon him, and to his providential leadership in the Church of Christ at a time when the "regular" ministry of the "Established Church" was in a state of declension amounting almost to decay. It is Bishop Burnet, one of their own prelates, who says that under the power and guidance of this "regular" priesthood the people of England had sunk into barbarism, or into a condition little to be distinguished from barbarism.

From all this, and a mass of other similar testimony, it is manifest that the "regular clergy" in Great Britain had almost wholly lost the apostolic spirit, and that there was unspeakable need of a revival thereof. This revival the Head of the Church was mercifully pleased to give in the person and career of John Wesley, in whom, as in no other man since apostolic days, "the marks of an apostle" appeared. But it is to be held in mind that the New Testament does not contain the word "succession," nor any word akin to it, as it is used by High Church pretenders. Yet if there be any virtue and any force in a human succession of ministerial orders, the Methodist Episcopal Church, through those truly apostolic men, John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, holds the best succession that has been known in modern times.

In all the differences of opinion among those who may be called "original Methodists" in America, no contention has arisen over the regularity and validity of the orders transmitted by Wesley to the American clergy. Strawbridge, that warm-

hearted Irish rebel, who celebrated both sacraments in Maryland with perfect freedom, in spite of the commands of Wesley and his helpers, did not deny the apostleship of the great Methodist leader. O'Kelley, with all his "Republican Methodism," accepted the spiritual headship of this modern apostle; though denying his claim to prelatical powers. The Christmas Conference raised no question as to the essential value and authority of Wesleyan ordination, though many of its members were quite familiar with the exclusive claims of the Anglican clergy. Nor yet has any subsequent General Conference held any serious discussion on the topic of ministerial "succession." With "the demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God" attending their ministry, this Church is entitled to trace its lineage straight up to Christ in glory, without making any halt at Canterbury or Rome. The use of prayer-book forms in celebrating the sacraments and conferring ordinations is merely traditional. The authority for it is not Wesleyan or Anglican. The General Conference holds all this ritualism in its hands, and at its pleasure may make changes in it, as has been done before, or even abolish it altogether. Thus with sacraments and orders the power of the General Conference begins.

THE EPISCOPACY.

The relations between the two chief factors in Methodist Church government furnish matter for careful study. As these relations begin with the Christmas Conference it will be allowable, without going into the question of the exact status of that most memorable assembly, to treat of the data afforded by it bearing upon one of the sections of the present chapter.

It does not appear that Mr. Wesley intended that the preachers should be assembled to witness—certainly not to pass upon—the ordination of Francis Asbury as deacon and elder, and his investment with the office of "general superintendent." Wesley had a poor opinion of Conferences. They were apt to become troublesome. They did not always know and keep their proper place. But Asbury was of a different mind. The splendid service rendered by his heroic band of itinerants had greatly raised them in his estimation, and when Dr. Coke pro-

posed to make him one of Mr. Wesley's two vicegerents over them—Coke himself being the other—he took that irrevocable step which, once and for all, placed the General Conference at the head of the government of the Church. At this point, as has been well shown by Dr. Neely in his "Governing Conference," the Wesleyan autocracy was first compelled to divide its plenary powers with the ministerial body in America.

The progress and result of this Methodist revolution must at first be traced in the career of Dr. Coke, who assumed to be the senior officer and the supreme power in the infant Church. In the first of these claims he was right. In the second he was wrong. And it took him nearly all the remainder of his life to find out his mistake. As between the authority of Asbury on the one hand, and the General Conference on the other, there does not appear to have been any dispute. But his senior colleague had been much in the society and service of Wesley, and innocently enough imagined that he was to be his great chief over again in the Methodism across the sea.

So grand a character and so great a career as that of the first Wesleyan bishop must ever hold an honored place in history. He touches the life of the body at a tender point. He stands as a sort of godfather to the infant Church on the occasion of its christening, which little one he regarded as in a kind of orphanage, absent from Wesley and absent from Britain, and to it he was moved to pour out the love of his great, affectionate heart, asking in return only one thing—obedience. Against such a view of the case the sturdy backwoodsmen instinctively protested.

Here were about sixty unlearned, uncouth, unordained, itinerant preachers, assembled in what they called a "Conference;" and these men had been called together to pass upon the acts which he held full power to perform without any of their interference or help. The situation was startling, and this great man must have been more than human if he had not felt conscious of the vast distance between himself and the subjects over which, in the name of Wesley, he had come to reign. He was also rich, according to the estimate of those times; while the preachers, as a rule, owned little in the world besides a horse a saddle, a bridle, and a pair of capacious saddlebags,

with whatever wardrobe and library could be stowed therein. The idea that such a body as this should presume to pass upon the question whether the appointment of John Wesley, in the case of Francis Asbury, should stand or fall, was too much for him to comprehend.

Further along in the procession of surprises he learned that the bishops were not only elected by, but responsible for their conduct to, the General Conference. At the session of 1796 the Conference even laid hands on the Episcopal Address, and "retouched" it, as the record shows, according to their good will and pleasure. Again, following the example of Mr. Wesley, the bishops prepared some "Notes on the Discipline." As Coke was almost the only Methodist scholar on the continent, it is fair to presume that he was the chief author of those Targums, of which fact there is also internal evidence. These the General Conference permitted to appear in the tenth edition of the Discipline, published in 1796, but never afterwards. Imagine a committee of preachers in London dictating to John Wesley as to the contents of "The Large Minutes!"

In spite of all this, and a great deal more besides, the good man never could comprehend the situation, though whenever the truth did dawn upon him he did not refuse to admit it.*

One act of Bishop Coke cost the Episcopacy a sharp restriction of power. It was at first a part of the duty of the bishops to appoint Conference sessions at such times and places as suited their convenience. During the year 1786-7 Bishop Coke strained this power so far as to change the times and places of some sessions which had been fixed by the Conference itself, for which offense complaint was made against him at the Baltimore Conference of that year, on the ground that

* Bishop McTyeire, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in a footnote to page 374 of his valuable "History of Methodism," relates the following incident: Dr. Coke had, at a session of the General Conference, introduced a proposition which seemed a little dictatorial; whereupon an Irish member, who had formerly been a Roman Catholic, called out, "Popery! popery! popery!" While the Conference was now in a state of great suspense and agitation, Dr. Coke seized the paper containing his own resolution, and, tearing it up, not in the most moderate manner, looked round upon the preachers and said: "Do you think yourselves equal to me?" Nelson Reed, one of the great men of that day, instantly rose, and, turning to Bishop Asbury, who was also present, said: "Dr. Coke has asked whether we think ourselves equal to him. I answer, Yes, we do think ourselves equal to him, notwithstanding he has been educated at Oxford, and has been honored with the degree of Doctor of Laws. And more than that, we think ourselves equal to Dr. Coke's king." The doctor yielded, asked pardon of the Conference for his abrupt and impulsive demonstration, and thus the matter ended.

"he had taken upon himself a right which the Conference never gave him."

At the same session it was also alleged that he had written improper letters to some of the preachers, "such as were calculated to stir up strife and contention among them." Seeing that the assembly was pretty generally united against him, he gave them a written promise not to repeat the offenses complained of, and never to exercise any authority whatever over the societies in America during his absence from that country. This quieted the contention; but it was not very long before the power of fixing the times, places, and boundaries of annual conferences passed wholly into the hands of the General Conference. (Lee's Short History of the Methodists, pp. 124-5.) The first of these powers was restored to the bishops, but the other two still remain with the General Conference.

It is easy to see that such prelacy on the part of an Englishman would be sharply resented by a Conference composed of new-made citizens of the great Republic; and that a state of strained relations would come to exist between the two chief governing powers of the Church. The ministry were grateful to the Wesleyan envoy, through whom they had received their "regular orders," and those who came to know him best believed in him as truly a man of God. But Coke was only bishop by courtesy. He had never been elected to that office, though unanimously received as a bishop by the General Conference; and as the increasing coolness between him and his American brethren increased he naturally preferred to reside in England, and did not bring his heart with him when he came across the sea. Thus he lost grade and ground continually, until the cry, "No more English bishops!" began to be heard among a party of the preachers, chief of whom was the brilliant Jesse Lee.

The difference between the first two general superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church may be stated in a single sentence. Asbury had been Americanized, Coke was always an Englishman. Aside from this, and away from all questions of episcopal, as opposed to conference authority, Dr. Coke was a lovable Christian, and, at times, a heavenly preacher. In all other respects except this one he might have been called a sanctified man. Consecrated he certainly was; devoting his

whole fortune to his great missionary projects, and dying at last on his way to India, in which country he had laid out the work that stands as his monument to-day.

It ought to be stated in this connection that Dr. Coke was not the first man to arouse the spirit of resistance towards the Wesleyan autocracy. Rankin, who had been sent over to govern in Wesley's name, had the same masterful temper, without Coke's abilities, of which there is a very broad hint in the journals of Brother Asbury. It was not without high provocation that O'Kelly, of whom it is the fashion to say so much that is evil and so little that is good, raised the flag of revolt against British personal government in the Church. He made the mistake of overdoing his work, and thus made a failure, where Lee, who was a much greater man, made a success.

That memorable debate in the General Conference of 1796, which kept the body at fever heat for two whole days, saved the Church from a crash that was only feebly suggested by the schism of O'Kelly. Coke was nominally successful; but the outcome was the final disappearance of British power over the Church in the United States. Some of it reappeared in Canada; but the Western air was not favorable to it, even in British America, and it presently faded away. With men like Rankin and Coke and Bunting and Osborn in command, Episcopacy would first have come to be intolerable, and then impossible.

A brief review of that second crisis in the relations of the General Conference to the Episcopacy is all that can be given here. On account of the failing health of Bishop Asbury, and the almost constant absence of Coke in Europe, it was determined to "strengthen the Episcopacy." There were several candidates for the succession, chief of whom was the brilliant Virginia anti-British leader, Jesse Lee. His only important competitor was Richard Whatcoat, the man whom, in 1787, Mr. Wesley had sent over with direction that he be made general superintendent. This the preachers had refused to do, fearing that if it were done Asbury would be recalled to England. Mr. Wesley had died in 1791, and Coke was, by courtesy, reckoned as his representative, though, as already shown, much of his power had been taken away.

In the midst of the excitement over the election the Con-

ference was startled by an overture from Bishop Coke in the following words:

OVERTURE OF BISHOP COKE.

"I offer myself to my American brethren entirely to their service, all I am and have, with my talents and labors in every respect, without any mental reservation whatever, to labor among them, and to assist Bishop Asbury; not to station the preachers at any time when he is present, but to exercise all episcopal duties when I hold a conference in his absence, and by his consent; and to visit the West Indies and France when there is an opening and I can be spared. (Signed,) THOMAS COKE.

"Conference Room, Baltimore, October 27, 1796."

Only scanty reports of the momentous discussion on the acceptance or rejection of this surprising overture are to be found; but it appears plain that Coke was a much more objectionable candidate than Whatcoat. It must have been a pitiful sight to see the great doctor pleading his own case before that once despised Conference; for he actually came into the presence of the body for that purpose. He did not hesitate to urge personal reasons why he should be received as the coadjutor of Bishop Asbury, saying, among other things: "I never was cast upon such a sea of uncertainty before."

When it became evident that the Conference would reject the overture, as they had a perfect right to do, since Coke had never been elected bishop at all, Asbury came to the rescue of his friend in the manner following: Rising from his chair with evident effort, he said, with much apparent feeling,

"If we reject him it will be his ruin, for the British Conference will certainly know of it, and it will sink him vastly in their estimation."

The Conference had already asked Bishop Asbury to nominate his new colleague, which he had prudently declined to do. This fact, together with Asbury's appeal to their magnanimity, turned the scale in Coke's favor, and he was accepted. But it was not the Coke of the Christmas Conference. He was really beginning to understand and appreciate the Americans, but his learning came too late. He could not bear to be only tolerated by them, and, contrary to all new-formed plans, he soon returned again to England. His British brethren, who best

knew his real worth, invited him to remain with them, which invitation he laid before the Conference of 1808, with the result that he was excused from all further participation in American affairs, and courteously commended to the Methodists of the country to which he always really belonged. Here ended the last attempt to set up a Wesleyan episcopate in America. The Church would have none of it, even though it were represented by so great and learned and pious a man as Thomas Coke.

A question now arises, the answer to which will take the reader across the sea: What could have been the reason for this remarkable overture of Dr. Coke to the General Conference?

This is a topic which has a history of its own, closely connected with the subject now in hand. On the death of Mr. Wesley in 1791, Dr. Coke—they never called him "bishop" in England—became the first man in the Wesleyan Conference and connection. He was Wesley's executor, and, along with Dr. Whitehead and Henry Moore, had charge of all the Wesleyan literary remains. Mr. Wesley's death occurred on the 2d of March, and on the 22d of July the British Conference opened at Manchester, with William Thompson as president, and Dr. Thomas Coke as secretary.

The societies were already in a state of ferment. Two parties had been formed: one, including the wealthier members, desiring to go back as far as possible to the churchmanship of Wesley in his early and middle life; the other, determined to push on in the direction of his later progress towards absolute separation from the Established Church. The Conference managed to keep the peace until the end of the session, but after its adjournment the strife broke out afresh.

The leader of the progressive party was Adam Clarke, to which, by force of his position, Dr. Coke belonged, though he was not a violent party man. After three years of strife, as no basis of harmony could be reached, a memorial was presented to the conference of 1794, setting forth the fact that Methodism possessed an Episcopacy in the person of Thomas Coke, whom Wesley had ordained as "general superintendent" for America; and in the person of Alexander Mather, whom he had

ordained for similar service in Great Britain. The memorialists went on to suggest that the United Kingdom be divided into eight districts; that the two men already in highest orders should ordain six others to a Wesleyan Episcopate, and that these eight should reside in, and preside over, the eight districts, subject to the appointment of the conference. And all this was to be done without separating the Methodists from the communion of the Established Church.

Along this line the battle raged anew, until, at the conference of 1795, a "Plan of Pacification" was enacted, according to which all full members of the conference were allowed to administer the sacraments; and the conference itself was authorized to ordain the preachers, without reference to either Wesleyan or Anglican Episcopacy. This was the death-blow to the hopes of "Superintendent Coke." He never could be the episcopal successor of John Wesley. The preachers knew the British blood too well to trust any of their number with such powers. One emperor had been essential; but, having been somewhat filled with him, they were determined never to have another. To make this assurance doubly sure it was enacted that any one who should renew the agitation over what was called "The Old Plan" and "The New Plan," should be expelled from the Connection.

With this door shut behind him, Dr. Coke returned again to America in time for the Conference of 1796, and as that body was about to "strengthen the Episcopacy," he surprised it with the overture whose interior history has thus been briefly given. This explains "the sea of uncertainty" upon which Dr. Coke was cast; shows why he, who did not enjoy America or Americans, was desirous of making his permanent home in that country, and makes clear the meaning of that plea of his good friend Asbury, on the strength of which the General Conference, almost in spite of itself, accepted him as coadjutor bishop.*

*When the American delegates to the first Ecumenical Conference, in 1881, appeared at the opening service they found one of those old roots of bitterness remaining. According to the custom at the City Road Chapel, the service began with reading the liturgy out of the Book of Common Prayer. At the chief of the Wesleyan chapels in London this remnant of "the old plan" remains, but in all the humbler places of Methodist worship in England it is "the new plan" which prevails. It may be well to add that, at the request of the foreign delegates, this part of the program was, after the first morning, omitted.

Notwithstanding the cry, "No more British bishops," Richard Whatcoat, another of Mr. Wesley's missionaries, was elected to the episcopate at the General Conference of 1800. He was a man of the Fletcher stamp, sweet and gentle; his rejection on a former occasion also counted in his favor, and he was cordially received in spite of the fact that the well-known choice of Asbury was Jesse Lee. But he had proved himself to be a devoted and lovable servant of the Lord, and when the decisive vote was announced it stood fifty-nine for Whatcoat, and fifty-five for Lee.

Heaven seemed to ratify the choice; for that session of the General Conference was distinguished above all others, before or since, by a mighty outpouring of the Spirit of God, in which it was estimated that two hundred souls were converted—nearly twice the number of the members of the body, which was one hundred and nineteen. Such a divine awakening must have shaken the little city of Baltimore from center to circumference. It also seems to have allayed the agitation over "British bishops," and although Whatcoat died after only six years of episcopal service, on July 5, 1806, his influence in the Church, at that critical and formative period of its history, may be set down as inferior to that of no other man except that of Asbury himself.

THE RESTRICTIVE RULES.

And now, at the General Conference of 1808 in the city of Baltimore, appears a surprising event in General Conference history. When was it ever heard, except in this case, that a legislative body, being the absolute master of the situation, voluntarily surrendered a portion of its own power, and that, too, without any possible advantage in return? If the action stood alone it would be incomprehensible, but taken in connection with one which preceded it at this memorable session, the mystery partially disappears.

On the third day of the session, May 9th, a memorial was presented by the New York Annual Conference, setting forth that the increasing extent of the fields occupied by the Church must soon render a general assembling of the preachers impossible. It therefore proposed the inauguration of a delegated General Conference. Two or three other annual conferences

had given in their adhesion to the measure, and its eventual adoption was a foregone conclusion.

Careful preparation for the event had evidently been made in the interest of the conservative party, chief of whom, at that period, was Joshua Soule. This great man was born in the Province of Maine in 1781. He was a preacher at the age of seventeen, and a presiding elder at twenty-three. He had only just dawned upon the Church. This was his first appearance at General Conference; but it would appear that Asbury, who was quick to discern superior talent, took the young man into his confidence; and it is to these two men that the chief honor (or otherwise) of framing and setting up what is now called "The Constitution" is due.

But why should it have been thought possible to persuade a Conference to reduce its own powers?

The answer is not far to seek. The body, as an actual General Conference, was about to prepare for its own funeral. Only seven elders of an annual conference out of fifty, with one additional for every ten members above that number, were thenceforth to constitute the governing body of the Church. Five out of six of the men who were (entitled to be) present at that time would never be in the place of power again. A new class of legislators was to be created, and it might not be amiss to regulate them a little. There was to be a break in the succession. The Conference of 1808 was not surrendering a part of its own plenary powers, but was providing that equal powers with themselves should never be exercised again.

There was also plainly visible, in the background of this memorable picture, the work of the episcopate for the protection of its own office against the dangers which might befall it at the hands of the new Conference. It was possible to reckon on what the whole body of preachers would do; but who could predict the kind of majorities that might come of selected classes of legislators, sent up by excitable annual conferences?

In the Journal of the session of 1808, pages 78 and 79, the following records occur:

"Tuesday, May 10th."

"Bishop Asbury having called for the mind of the Conference whether any further regulation of the order of General Conference be necessary, the question was put and carried in the affirmative."

"Moved by Stephen G. Roszel, and seconded by William Burke, that a committee be appointed to draw up such regulations as they may think best, to regulate the General Conferences, and report the same to this body. Carried."

"Moved by Bishop Asbury that the committee be formed from an equal number from each of the annual conferences. Carried."

Accordingly a committee of fourteen, two from each of the annual conferences then in existence, was formed.

On Tuesday, May 24th, they presented their report. Another report was at the time under consideration, whereupon it was "moved by the chair that the report of the Committee on Review (of manuscript hymns) lie on the table until the regulations concerning the General Conference be determined. Carried." (Journal, 1808, p. 87.) Thus for the third time the fingers of the episcopal hand appear.

But there was no contention. A delegated Conference was inevitable. There never had been any strife over the Articles of Religion or the General Rules; and now that the cry against "British bishops" had passed out of date, there was nothing in the proposed "regulations" to excite alarm. Lee himself was in favor of them. Thus the whole paper was adopted, article by article, without debate, and the bishopric was safe.

If any one is inclined to question the right of the General Conference of 1808 to anchor the future to the past, it may be replied: The unwritten statute which affirms that "no General Conference can bind its successor," was not known at that period. Besides, the actual General Conference was closing its career; its successor would be "General" only in name. A new era was about to dawn in Methodist legislation, and so complete was the consensus of the Church in favor of this new chapter in the Discipline, that even the General Conference of 1812 did not complain of the limitation of their powers.

Another important action at the Conference of 1808 was the vote on the question of the election of presiding elders; a measure that has, in subsequent sessions of the great Council, persistently appeared and reappeared. The proposal was urged by some of those who had sympathized with the radicals in the O'Kelley controversy, but there was not enough of that leaven in the house to leaven a majority of the lump. A further reference to this case will be made in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE MINISTRY (Continued).

FACING DOWN A CONFERENCE.

"NO question is settled until it is settled right."

Whether or not this proverb covers the topic of an elective presiding eldership, certain it is, that this question has a very persistent life. At the General Conference of 1820, held in the city of Baltimore, it reappeared more vigorous than ever, in spite of the rebuff it had received in 1808. And here again it is bound up with the episcopate in the most conspicuous manner.

Joshua Soule, the reputed author of the "Constitution" of 1808, was in 1820 elected bishop. Out of a total of eighty-eight votes he received forty-seven. This was on Saturday, May 13th. Six days later a special committee, to whom had been referred some papers on the election of presiding elders, made their report, the chief provision whereof was adopted by a vote of sixty-one to twenty-five. This was to the effect that the bishop presiding in an annual conference might nominate three times the number of presiding elders required, out of which lists the conference should elect the requisite number. Upon this Soule wrote a letter to the bishops, requesting the postponement of his ordination. He challenged the right of the Conference to limit the power of the episcopate, and declared that, as an incumbent of that office, he should not feel himself bound to obey the order in question. Thus the old battle was again set in order.

Soule was a man who had the courage of his opinions, and, as already seen, he was the leader of the episcopal party. As the contest went on, the majority weakened before the face of this determined man, and instead of rescinding his election, and choosing another bishop, a motion was brought forward to reconsider the action of the Conference, against which his exception had been taken. Twice this motion came to a vote, and twice it resulted in a tie, although the measure had originally been passed by a vote of nearly three to one. The

second tie was decided adversely by the chair; on the ground that, as the motion to reconsider did not have a majority, it therefore did not prevail. Finally, just before adjournment, the resignation of the bishop elect was accepted, but not until after the question raised by him, as to the veto powers of the bishops, had been referred to the annual conferences.

That Soule did not lose caste by his bold stand, and that the episcopate stood heartily with him, appears from the fact that, at the final session, he was made chairman of a committee "to assist the episcopacy to revise the form of Discipline, and to conform it to the regulations and resolutions of this Conference." At the session of 1824 it was reported that the annual conferences "had judged the election of presiding elders to be unconstitutional;" whereupon the Conference voted that the favorable action at the session of 1820 "was not of authority, and should not be carried into effect." After this Soule was triumphantly elected to the episcopate again, along with that other majestic man from New England, Elijah Hedding.

And now it might have been supposed that the episcopate was stronger than ever. But the senior member of the Board was growing old; the next two men, George and Roberts, never made any very great impression upon the Church; Hedding lost some of his power in trying to quiet the agitation on the subject of slavery, which then threatened the peace, if not the existence of the body, and the progressive party was getting into the saddle once more. The two new bishops added in 1832, Andrew and Emory, were neither of them men of the stamina of Soule and Hedding. Andrew was an element of weakness because of his relations to slavery, and Emory was better fitted to be an author than a general superintendent. Thus the prestige of the episcopate declined, and the Conference was uppermost again.

COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY.

Furthermore, a new factor had gained place in the Great Council, to wit: The Committee on Episcopacy. This body may be said to have had its beginning at the General Conference of 1812; when so much of the address of Bishop McKendree as related to the episcopate was referred to a special committee.

Hitherto such references had been made in an irregular way, and thus they were repeated from session to session.

On the second day of the Conference of 1836 six committees were raised, in the following order: Episcopacy, Itinerancy, Boundaries, Book Concern, Education, and Missions. On motion of Laban Clark, these were henceforth to be known and published as "standing committees." Thus the permanent continuance and leading position of the Committee on Episcopacy was assured. Chief men of the delegations from the annual conferences, in selecting their outside work, by seniority of election, would naturally choose a place on the committee having to do with the greatest personages and the most important questions. Thus the Committee on Episcopacy grew rapidly in power and prestige, until it came to be a kind of judicial aristocracy to which, for one month in every four years, even a bishop must bow.

At the same session the Judiciary Committee was set up. This, indeed, had not much to do with the episcopate at first; its field of review being the actions of annual conferences, from which appeals had been taken to the General Conference. But the presence of such a court of appeal led to its use in other and more important matters, and when, after lay delegation, there came to be eminent legal gentlemen on its list, the Judiciary Committee began to divide the legal honors of the Church with the officers who had been accustomed to carry them all.

And perhaps this is best. The Church has always had faith in its bishops. But it had begun to be observed that the long-continued exercise of power tends to develop what may be called the official sense: a peculiar habit of mind which leads a man to consider all subjects first as to their bearing upon his order or himself. For this reason, it may be, that fewer questions are now referred to the bishops, and more to the Judiciary Committee.

BISHOPS OF TO-DAY.

It is only in recent years that writers of history have been expected to deal with living men. To say that one had "passed into history" was equivalent to saying that he was dead. Such,

however, is not the present manner in historic literature. The present age is most interested in men and women who are most alive. It will not, therefore, be regarded as discourtesy if, in these pages, the later as well as the earlier form of writing occasionally appears.

The subjects of slavery and lay delegation, to which the episcopate has held most vital relations, will be treated in chapters by themselves. Therefore, in order to preserve the unity of subjects, the most of what remains to be set forth concerning the General Conference and Episcopacy may be found in those connections. We are thus carried past the stormy period of 1840, 1844, and 1848, and brought down to the days of bishops who are well remembered by living men.

In 1852 the General Conference opened in Boston, under the presidency of Bishops Waugh, Morris and Janes. It closed with comparative peace, having added to the list of chief pastors the names of Levi Scott, Matthew Simpson, Edward R. Ames, and Osmon C. Baker. The number of annual conferences had now reached thirty-nine. Among the new additions were Wyoming and California.

In Bishop Simpson the episcopate reached its ideal. In his presence men felt themselves honored; and conferences, whether annual or general, instinctively paid him their homage and their love. But it is not fair to measure other men by him. The human race furnishes scant material out of which characters are made. That "official sense" seems never to have been developed in him. In his mind it was as much an instinct to settle cases solely on their merits as it was with the mind of his great friend Abraham Lincoln.

In 1864 the noise, or, at least, the echoes of war were heard all over the land. The General Conference met in the city of Philadelphia, and elected three new bishops: Clark, Thomson, and Kingsley. At the next session the board were desired to extend their personal supervision over the mission fields of the Church, and Kingsley was sent to circumnavigate the globe, *via* San Francisco, on that errand. Having visited the missions in Japan and China, he turned his face homeward, *via* India and Palestine. But he was destined to journey to a holier land. On the morning of April 6, 1870, he died sud-

denly at Beyrout, Syria, of heart disease. In the Christian burial-ground of that city, among the tombs of other missionaries who have given their lives to their work, the General Conference has caused his monument to be erected over his grave.

The most important doing at the Conference of 1872, the first at which lay delegates appeared, was the election of eight new bishops; viz., Bowman, Harris, Foster, Wiley, Merrill, Andrews, Gilbert Haven, and Peck. As far as the selection was concerned, no other equal number of equal men could have been found in the Church. The question had been referred to the Episcopal Board, "How many new bishops are needed for the work?" to which, in due time, Bishop Ames answered, "Eight."

The answer was a surprise. It was doubtless intended to relieve the pressure, which was becoming terrific, on the theory that it would be easier to elect a large number out of the superabundant list of candidates than a small number. Possibly, also, it was considered that such an election would put farther off the distressful day when the present scene might be repeated. But for once the profound sagacity of Bishop Ames was at fault. The question began to be asked, "Is the Church for the bishops, or are bishops for the Church?" The episcopate, if strengthened in one way, was weakened in another. Too many men had been elected for too many different reasons. While the memory of the General Conference of 1872 remains, that act is not likely to be repeated.

At this memorable session a new "Code of Ecclesiastical Procedure" was adopted. It was prepared by a committee of legal gentlemen from among the lay delegates, and, as a consequence, was made to conform to the procedure of other parliamentary assemblies. Under its operation the last of the special powers and privileges of the bishops, in their capacity of presiding officers, disappeared. They were still allowed to decide questions of law involved in Conference proceedings; but they might no longer use their position for making motions or speeches, as had been done aforetime. They could no longer adjourn a Conference, General or annual, when, in their judgment, the legitimate business of the session was finished; nor

might they refuse to put a motion which they did not regard as legal, or as germane to the business in hand.

At this time the General Conference began to determine who of the bishops were "effective" and who were "non-effective." Places of episcopal residence were appointed; but it was allowed that these should be selected according to seniority. Thus one after another of the privileges of the office were taken away, until the episcopate, as compared with what it had been in the early days, was somewhat weak and limited. But there was still enough of it left to be desired as "a good work."

The Conference of 1888 made the rule which requires a two-thirds majority for the election of bishops, a measure which lengthened the time required for the voting, but which gave additional dignity to the office.

No important changes in the relation of the two branches of Methodist Church government occurred in 1892. In 1896, according to the rule already established, three venerable bishops—to wit, Bowman, Foster, and Taylor—were, with all due honor and regret, placed on the non-effective list. Thenceforward they were to sustain an honorary membership to the office which they had so honorably filled.

At this session the placing of an additional bishop, or bishops, in foreign mission fields was much considered, Shanghai and Nagasaki being nominated as cities for episcopal residence. The proposition caused no little surprise, and even some amusement; but the project was ably supported by the scholarly Dr. Asada, lay delegate from Japan, as well as by an able article from the pen of Bishop Walden in one of the Conference papers.

The territory of India is as large as the whole United States of America east of the Rocky Mountains. From Karachi to Singapore, the two cities in that Methodist mission field most remote from each other, is a longer distance than from Boston to San Francisco. And there are other episcopal routes of travel quite as long in the journeys to China and Japan. Gradually the General Conference is coming to understand the geography of world-wide Methodism, and of it the world, as well as the Church, is asking large things.

One minor incident in the session of 1896 is worthy of mention; viz., the change in the manner of nominating ~~bishops~~. all the offices to be elected by the General Conference, except the Bishops.

In former Conferences there had been a *viva voce* nomination, which had become almost disgraceful in such a reverend and honorable body. On this occasion, for the first time, it was ordered that those who desired to present names of candidates for ~~this high~~ office should do so in writing, the names to be read by the secretary. This simple method of bringing order out of confusion suggested the regretful question, Why was not this done long ago?

Although the right of a bishop to originate motions, and to address the House in the line of its business had long ago been taken away, on several recent occasions a bishop, "by request," has made "a statement," or "an explanation," which was evidently intended to sway the vote of the House; but at such times the case he was "stating" or "explaining" lost rather than gained thereby. Notably was this true at the Conference of 1892 at Omaha, and that of 1896 at Cleveland, when the final reports of the Committees on Constitution were under consideration. The proposed measure would have had the effect to enlarge the area of restricted territory, and thus have weakened the authority of the General Conference, as was the case when the original Restrictive Rules were enacted. On this issue the bishops joined forces with the committees. The House treated the reports with due respect. Every reasonable privilege was given to the learned and laborious committees; but on the last appearance of that ponderous document, near the close of the sessions of both these Chief Councils of the Church, due notice was served on all concerned that not easily does the Methodist General Conference part with any more of its power.

PRESIDING ELDERSHIP.

In the early days of Methodism in America there was a much better understanding of the word "leadership" than there ever has been in later times. The wilderness was a school in which a rough heroism was developed. Thus the masterful leadership of a presiding elder over the "saddlebags men" of his district was as much a matter of course as was the command of a colonel over his regiment. Some of those districts covered the ground now occupied by three or four Annual Conferences, and some had boundaries on two or three sides and extended in

other directions as far as the elder might be able to push his way. This was the case with the great Western District to which the intrepid McKendree was appointed by Bishop Asbury in 1801. It embraced all the territory beyond the Alleghanies between Central Ohio and the borders of Georgia, and it extended westward farther and farther every day.

In 1804, Benjamin Young was appointed "Presiding Elder of Illinois," his field including about a million of square miles. Hooper Crews traveled a triangular district, whose three points were Milwaukee, Galena, and Cairo. And there was that Methodist Daniel Boone, whose real name was Jesse Walker, a man who appeared on the Illinois District in 1806. He is said to have regarded roads, and even bridle-paths, as useless luxuries, and he fairly reveled in the wild free life of the woods.

Then at the head of the itinerant army was the bishop, a superior being who was to the preachers and people a second edition of Moses, whom it was an instinctive part of their religion to obey. And what, then, must a conference have been? Even a quarterly conference, with the presiding elder present to preach and hold the love-feast, and celebrate the holy communion, and baptize the infants and the newly-converted, was a great occasion, which good Methodists would sometimes ride twenty miles to reach. An annual conference was an awe-inspiring body. The bishop himself was there, along with perhaps four or five presiding elders and twenty or thirty preachers, an occasion memorable and mighty.

But the General Conference! That was something too high for ordinary mortals. If a frontier Methodist ever saw one he handed down the fact as a family tradition, a token of superiority. It was in that mysterious realm that the Book of Discipline was made. A very little book indeed it was; but spiritually great in inverse ratio to its size. That was a profound piece of Churchly wisdom which led the early Presbyterians to put forth "The Shorter Cathechism." The Larger Catechism alone never could have dominated for a dozen generations the theology of the English-speaking world.

It was at the General Conference of 1792 that the assistant bishops, as they might have been called, received the title of "presiding elders." The itinerant ministry now numbered 266,

their fields of labor extending from Upper Canada and Nova Scotia down almost to the Gulf of Mexico. Concerning the need for this intermediary office, there was no room for doubt. No mortal man, even though that man were Asbury, could superintend the whole of this vast diocese. There was his colleague, Dr. Coke. But he had evidently fulfilled his whole mission to America when he had conveyed from the apostolic Wesley to his "assistant" in the New World the order of general superintendent or bishop.

The history of the O'Kelley schism draws attention to the danger that lurks in this high position; that is to say, the danger that a presiding elder may, under special temptations, mistake himself for a bishop. But temptations of this sort have rarely been fatal.

In the American Minutes of the Conference of 1792 the following questions occur:

"*Ques. 1.* By whom are the presiding elders to be chosen?
"*Ans.* The presiding elders are to be chosen by the bishops."

(In 1872 the following words were added, not by way of amendment, but for more complete expression of the sense originally intended: "By whom they are also to be stationed and changed.")

"*Ques. 3.* How long may a bishop allow an elder to preside in the same district?
"*Ans.* A bishop may allow an elder to preside in the same district for any term not exceeding four years."

With the lengthening of the pastoral term to five years by the General Conference of 1888, the term of the presiding eldership was lengthened to six years.

Although this office is an intermediate one between the bishop and the preacher, it belongs strictly to the episcopate, of which it is the sole official representative. This will appear from a careful study of the duties of this officer, as laid down in the original statement thereof, thus:

"What are the duties of a presiding elder?
"*Ans.* I. To travel through his appointed district.
"II. In the absence of the bishop to take charge of all the

elders and deacons, traveling and local preachers, and exhorters in his district.

"III. To change, receive, and suspend preachers in his district during the intervals of the conferences, and in the absence of the bishop. Provided, however, that a presiding elder shall not change a preacher in his district from a charge to which he has been appointed by the bishop, and appoint him to another to which he could not be legally appointed by the bishop.

"V. To oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the Church. . . .

"VI. To take care that every part of our Discipline be enforced in his district. . . .

"VII. It shall be his further duty to attend the bishop when present in his district, and to give him, when absent, all necessary information of the state of his district." (Sherman, "History of Discipline," pp. 187-189.)

It thus appears that, for nearly all the time, the presiding elder is bishop in his own district; *i. e.*, a diocesan bishop in the absence of the general superintendent; and that as such he is part and parcel of the general superintendency. Some verbal modifications have been made at various times, but none that change the relation of the presiding elder to the episcopate. He is a ruler. He can do all the acts which a bishop can do in the absence of that officer, except the act of ordination; and so full are the powers committed to him that if the state of things contemplated in the Discipline were actually to occur—viz., "if there should be no bishop in the Church"—then the presiding eldership, as it has existed from the General Conference of 1792 down to the present time, could take up and carry forward the entire operation of the Church without a jar in its machinery. If the bishops are the presidents of the Church, the presiding elders are the vice-presidents, rightly entitled to do all the episcopal work which such a definition of their office would imply.

In point of fact the presiding elder is the only personal presentation of the episcopal office which the vast majority of the Church ever see, and the only times in all their lives when the great mass of preachers ever feel the touch of an episcopal hand is on the days of their two ordinations.

In their "Notes on the Discipline," published in the edition of 1796—and never afterwards—Bishops Coke and Asbury say,

"When Mr. Wesley drew up a form of government for our Church in America he desired that no more elders should be ordained, in the first instance, than were absolutely necessary." It appears that it was Mr. Wesley's idea that this ordination was something in the way of exclusive power and dignity, almost wholly connected with the administration of the sacraments; but the rapid extension of the work, and the splendid service rendered by these men in "full orders" soon caused their numbers to be greatly increased.

In the "Notes" above mentioned, Bishops Coke and Asbury use the phrase, "presiding or ruling elders," which clearly indicates that it is to the episcopate, and not to the pastorate, that this intermediary office belongs. They also call attention to the great revivals which, from 1784 to 1796, swept over the country, and assign as one of the chief human causes thereof, "the complete and effective executive government" of the presiding eldership. With such testimony in its favor, it is not strange that this assistant bishopric has remained what Coke and Asbury called it, "a very capital part of the executive government of the Church." (Notes on the Discipline, as quoted by Sherman, pages 418 and 419.)

Yet it is evident that a class of ministers seem to think the presiding eldership the weak point in the line, since with so much persistence it is again and again assailed. Thus, at the General Conference of 1808, the election of presiding elders by the annual conferences was urged, a measure which has become familiar to old habitués of the Great Council. Joshua Soule, the leader of the conservative side of the House, felt strong enough to treat the proposal with disdain, and several times moved that the vote be taken without further debate. At last, on taking the yeas and nays, the vote stood, 52 for the measure, and 73 against it.

It ought to be noted that between the times of the proposal of this reform and the final vote thereon, that splendid and popular pioneer presiding elder, William McKendree, had been elected bishop. If the office had fallen to some other man, the result of the vote might have been different; but to reduce the powers of the bishopric just at the beginning of McKendree's episcopal career would have looked like a blow in his face.

Hence, in part, the completeness of the victory of the episcopal, or conservative, party, the results whereof continue to this day.

But as in the case of bishops so also in that of presiding elders, the Conference has found cause for a reduction of their powers. At this same session it was ordered that deacons should be ordained on the recommendation of an annual conference, instead of upon that of a presiding elder, as had previously been done.

In 1816 another effort was made to capture this position from the bishops and their assistants, but without success. Still again in 1820 the onset was made, and this time it was temporarily successful; but, as has already been seen, the bold stand of Soule, the bishop-elect, turned the victory into defeat. If the change had been made, it would have amounted to a revolution in that office, swinging it over from its status as a part of the episcopacy to that of the rank and file of the ministry. These officers would then owe their position and their allegiance to the annual conferences, and thus the balance of power between the bishops and the itinerancy would be destroyed.

The victory of the advocates of this revolution at the General Conference of 1820 was evidently gained by the votes of the weakest portion of the body; else they would not have so easily been forced from their position by the bold stand taken by the bishop-elect, to which the attention of the reader has been called in the preceding chapter. It was a striking, not to say a sublime, spectacle to see a man, with his place assured in the highest office of the Church, jeoparding that office in the maintenance of his convictions, and challenging the vote of a two-thirds majority of the body to which he owed his election. But, as he viewed the case, the foundations of the episcopate were in danger. If the Conference of 1820 could take from the bishops the power of appointing presiding elders, some later Conference might take away other essential powers; and thus, by degrees, accomplish what the Restrictive Rules were ordained to prevent.

Incumbents of the two executive offices of the Church do well to honor the memory and the record of Joshua Soule. It was he who saved both the episcopate and the presiding elder-

ship from such a loss of power and function as must, unless the lost ground could have been recovered, have landed the Methodist Episcopal Church in the nondescript situation of British Wesleyan Methodism. A little body in a little territory can be governed by a committee; but an army must have commanders if it is to overrun half the habitable globe.

True, Soule went over to the south in the disruption of 1844; but he carried with him the clearest head and the stoutest will which at that date—perhaps at any date—belonged to the Methodist Church. The contradictory acts of two successive General Conferences—viz., those of 1844 and 1848—show the danger to which the Communion would have been subjected if the Great Council, with its changeful composition, had permanently carried plenary powers, and been always able to make and unmake laws and officers at its unrestricted will and pleasure.

As already recorded in the previous chapter, the vote of the Conference of 1820 was rescinded in 1824, and nothing more was heard of an elective eldership for a considerable length of time.

At the session of 1840 an appeal came up against the action of the New England Annual Conference in the case of Daniel Dorchester, whom his conference had censured for refusing to put a motion in a quarterly conference which he regarded as not germane to the business of that body. The excitement in the Church in New England on the slavery question was rapidly increasing. Anti-slavery societies were forming inside the Churches, and anti-slavery resolutions were introduced at quarterly and annual conferences, of which the above-mentioned motion was an example. Dr. Dorchester was a man of the Bishop Hedding stamp, who imagined that the dangerous agitation might be put down by a liberal use of official power. Hence his refusal to allow the discussion of abolitionism in his quarterly conferences.

It is a notable proof of the strength of the presiding eldership that, in an anti-slavery General Conference, the action of the New England Annual Conference against Dorchester was reversed. And not only so, but the Conference voted to confirm these powers to the eldership, so that they might decide

questions of law in a quarterly conference arising out of its proper business, refuse to put a motion which was not constitutional or not germane to the subject in hand, and to adjourn the conference when all its legitimate business had been transacted. In these respects the powers of the eldership were made equal to those of the bishopric.

With its office so strong and its position so secure, it is not strange that the presiding eldership came to be abused. It was not difficult for able and worldly-wise men to join themselves together in the annual conferences wherein they held this sub-episcopal position, and by long-continued holding of power to become "masters in Israel," in a sense not contemplated by the New Testament. It came to be the unwritten law in the cabinet that a retiring presiding elder should nominate his successor. In this situation two elders retiring at the same time could take a brotherly interest in each other, and thus keep up an oscillatory change between two men and two districts for an indefinite length of time. In case the times and seasons did not admit of this arrangement, the boundaries of districts were sometimes changed so as to save the retiring governor from falling into the ranks of the governed. There is a case on record of a presiding elder who was appointed to an Indiana district by Bishop Asbury in 1812, and who, either in that state or in Illinois, served the Church in that capacity until 1869, when he took a superannuated relation. (Simpson's "Cyclopædia of Methodism," page 170.)

There is an apparatus known to mechanical engineers as "the compensation-balance." A similar sort of apparatus exists in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the action whereof is specially worthy of notice in reference to the above-mentioned abuse of the office of assistant bishop. Complaints, deep if not loud, began to come up from men who did not relish this monopoly of powers and honors, the result of which was an enactment, by the General Conference of 1844, that the bishops should not reappoint a presiding elder to the same district, at the close of his four years' term of service, till he had been absent therefrom for six years. This derangement much improved the situation, and cured, in most cases, an evil that was coming to be a danger in the Church.

At the session of the General Conference in 1876, held in the city of Baltimore, the topic of chief interest, next to that of the establishment of fraternity with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was the old one of an elective eldership. It was decided in the negative. Such action, in the presence of 133 lay delegates, in a body whose total membership was only 267, showed that the assistant bishopric was strong, not only with the pulpit, but also with the pew.

At the sessions of 1892 and of 1896 some feebly-supported memorials were presented relating to this much-agitated subject. A new phase of the question was the proposition to give the presiding elders co-ordinate power with the bishops in the work of stationing the preachers. But this, along with all other proposed changes in the executive arm of the Church, met with little favor.

Another suggestion, somewhat startling, and held to be one of the curiosities of the long-continued argument, was that of merging the two executive offices of the Church in one. This would be accomplished by raising the presiding elders to the rank of bishops, increasing the size of districts, and decreasing the number of elder-bishops, until the two classes of administration should, in process of time, become unified, and still the "itinerant general superintendency" would be preserved. In that case the annual or quadrennial assignment of episcopal fields of labor would lie with the General Conference, instead of, as at present, with a stationing committee of the bishops themselves.

The large increase in the number of bishops, the large relative decrease in the number of presiding elders, and the diocesan size of many of the districts, especially in the chief cities, might some day, if these processes were to go on, bring the above-mentioned startling proposition forward as matter of serious concern.

MINISTERIAL TIME-LIMIT.

In America, as well as in England, the only possible ministry for the Methodists was a movable ministry. Though sadly deficient in learning, a man of sound judgment and deep experience might be an unspeakable blessing to the societies on a six

weeks' circuit for a twelvemonth, who would become stale and unprofitable in a single pulpit for that length of time. Even Charles Wesley lost caste with the Wesleyans in London because, on account of his orders and his learning, he insisted on preaching continuously at the Foundry, and afterwards at the City Road Chapel.

The General Conference was made up of itinerants, and well did they understand the vital importance of this plan of campaign. Thus in the early Minutes are records of appointments for six months at the city stations, though the wide range of country circuits made it possible for the preacher to "continue there a year." * Frankness requires the confession that the great pulpit reputations of some of the Methodist fathers was largely due to their itinerant life. The men in settled pastorates over established Churches had said all their best things long ago; but here comes an itinerant, fresh from a great revival out in the woods, and he flames like a comet, while his competitor only shines like a star. Down to a very late date in the history of the Church the fame of its greatest pulpit orators was made either on wide-range circuits or in charge of general interests: like Durbin as missionary secretary, or Fisk and Olin at the head of a struggling university, on whose behalf they ranged the country round.

As the grade of the preachers improved, their term of service was lengthened. The General Conference of 1804 directed that the bishops should not allow a preacher to remain more than two years in one charge, except presiding elders, the book stewards, and the supernumerary and worn-out preachers. (Sherman, p. 34.) The Conference of 1820 increased the number of these exceptions by adding, "teachers in Methodist institutions and missionaries to the Indians." The Journals of the General Conference show that transgressions of this law constituted an amiable weakness on the part of the bishops, for which it was occasionally needful to reprove them. But the only wonder is that from two to four

* In the Minutes of the first Conference in America, held in Philadelphia July 14, 1773, the following record appears:

"*Question* 1. How are the preachers stationed?

"*Answer.* New York, Thomas Rankin. } To change in four months."
Philadelphia, George Shadford. }

men, with from five to eight hundred preachers on their hands to be placed, and with a more than equal number of places to be pleased, it should have been possible so nearly to obey this burdensome command.

In 1844 the strictness of the rule was increased. The bishops were forbidden to appoint a preacher to the same charge more than two years in six, nor in the same city more than four years in succession, nor to return him to that city until he had been absent six years. (Sherman, p. 48.)

About this time a long-term party began to make itself heard. There were preachers, it was said, whose superior powers would enable them to make deep and permanent impression on a community if they could only be allowed to remain long enough. But the sense of the General Conference, which well represented the sense of the Church on this subject, was not with them, and it was not until 1864 that the Great Council could be persuaded to try the experiment of a three years' pastoral term. In 1888 it was believed that the experiment had been a success, and two more years were added. Then, however, it began to be noticed that the law of "the survival of the fittest" had a place in the "Constitution" of the Church. A few successful pastors were in favor of a still larger liberty as to time of service; but the majority of the ministry, and especially of the laity, as represented in the General Conference of 1896 at Cleveland, were of quite a different mind. It was even said by some who were familiar with the practical workings of large city Churches that a return to the three years' limit, with provision for meeting real emergencies, would not be amiss.

Following the course of the former session, the Committee on Itinerancy introduced a proposition that, on certain conditions, the bishops should be allowed to appoint preachers to the same charges year by year for a period not to exceed ten years in twenty. Again an adverse minority report was substituted for the majority report, which was, for substance, as follows:

The question of the pastoral term limit was to be submitted to the annual and lay electoral conferences in the fall of 1898 and the spring of 1899, under the three following forms:

1. Shall it remain as it is? 2. Shall it be extended with conditions? 3. Shall it be removed altogether?

In an exciting session on the last night of the Conference of 1896 no vote could be reached, a call of the House at a late hour showing that there was not a quorum present. Judging from the general tone of the proceedings and from the trend of opinion at large, it would appear that the above form for determining this much-agitated subject would be one of the next two Constitutional questions submitted to the conferences and the Church.

ALLOWANCES.

The relation between "allowances" and conferences is both visible and vital. In 1792 the allowance for a preacher was "six pounds a quarter Pennsylvania currency, besides traveling expenses." The Pennsylvania "pound" was equal to two dollars and sixty-six cents. Later it was eighty dollars a year; and in the General Conference of 1800 it was increased to a hundred dollars a year. How the preachers managed to get through the war period, when "dollars" decreased so rapidly in value, there are no records at hand to show. But it will be easy to perceive that the attendance at Conferences very much depended upon whether or not the preacher had received his "allowance."

This word has need of a special definition here. It did not signify that because the General Conference fixed a preacher's stipend at sixty-four or eighty or a hundred dollars, that it would undertake to insure his receiving that sum of money for his year's work. It merely signified that if he were so blessed as to obtain the specified amount, he would be "allowed" to keep and use it. But in case he were to receive more, the surplus must be handed over to the conference stewards for the benefit of his less fortunate brethren.

Thus the size of the early General Conferences was largely a financial question. If a preacher had not received his allowance, he must forego the great privilege of meeting his brethren at the annual assembly, unless his circuit were a central one—*i. e.*, near to Philadelphia or Baltimore. As the area

of their work extended, the long distances to be traveled were a bar even to many of the "traveling preachers." In this the power of the Church became concentrated in the Middle States, and a supposed General Conference was general only in name. Thus the General Conference of 1800 was composed of 119 members, though the whole body of the ministry numbered 287; that of 1804 had an attendance of 129, while the first delegated Conference, that of 1812, was composed of 90 members. Thus the personal relations of the preachers to the Great Council were not so seriously affected by the change to a delegated body.

The smallness of the "allowance" was for a long time a point of weakness in the system. Only unmarried men could subsist on it. Bishop Asbury, who was a celibate for the kingdom of heaven's sake, mourns, both in his heart and his journal, over the frequent loss of his effective men, saying, "Now that they are married, they will presently locate." Between the Conference of 1788 and 1792 no less than a hundred and six had located. The action of the session of 1800, already mentioned, not only raised the allowance to a hundred dollars a year, but also made an effort to aid the widows and orphans of preachers. The wives of live men were supposed to be able to look out very much for themselves. On this occasion it was ordered:

"1. That no sum exceeding sixty-four dollars shall in any one year be applied to the use of an itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out single preacher.

"2. That no sum exceeding one hundred and twenty-eight dollars shall be applied to the use of an itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out married preacher."

The maximum allowance of the widow of a preacher was fixed at sixty-four dollars and of a dependent orphan at sixteen dollars a year. (Sherman, History of Discipline, p. 252.)

It was at the General Conference of 1796 that the Chartered Fund was projected, to relieve "necessitous cases" among the traveling preachers who had been employed on fields that were particularly poor. A preamble and resolution on this subject, adopted at the General Conference of 1896, contains two facts worthy of permanent record.

The following paper, presented by (Rev.) W. M. Swindells, of Philadelphia, was adopted:

"WHEREAS, The Chartered Fund, organized in 1796, has completed a century of its beneficence, and, although its capital is only about $50,000, it has declared in dividends to conference claimants a sum three times the amount of its capital stock; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That this General Conference recommends that during the year 1896 each pastor of each charge in the Church shall so present the benevolent features of the fund to his congregation that its capital stock may be increased to a sum worthy of the cause and creditable to the Church." (Journal of General Conference of 1896, page 100.)

In 1832 the General Conference ordered an annual collection in all the congregations for "conference claimants," and an estimating committee in each annual conference, to examine into and report to the conference stewards the amount needed by each of the claimants. The second place of honor is given to this collection. Every preacher, on the passage of his character at his annual conference, is required to report: first, the amount he has raised for missions; and second, the amount raised for conference claimants.

Previous to 1804 there had been an entrance fee of twenty shillings, Pennsylvania currency, paid by each itinerant on entering the ranks, but at that session this bar was let down. Doubtless it was found that there were hindrances enough to keep mercenary and ambitious men out of this ministry, without making them pay two dollars and sixty cents at the door. But, once in, he must pay the twenty shillings a year into the charity fund of the conference, which amount, it was hoped, would allow sixty-four dollars a year to each "worn-out preacher," and nearly the same amount to the widow of a preacher who had actually worked himself to death.

It was at the Christmas Conference that "allowances" were first made; but by degrees the plans for the maintenance of the preachers, the superannuates, and the widows and orphans were recast into a chapter in the Discipline, entitled, "Ministerial Support." The men in actual service came at length to sustain business relations to their people, except that in no case where a preacher failed to receive the salary estimated for

him by the "Estimating Committee" of his charge, could he collect the deficiency by process of law. It was, and still is, held that a preacher takes his place at his own risk, just as the charge takes the preacher at theirs; and under this view it presently came to be a matter for concealment rather than complaint on the part of a pastor who was obliged to go to conference with a margin of his salary unpaid.

Notwithstanding the privations incident to the life of a Methodist preacher, only once in the period between 1812 and the present time has there been a serious deficiency in the number of men for the rapidly-growing work. At the General Conference of 1852, held in the city of Boston, a day of prayer was ordered to be observed "for the raising up of more ministers." This prayer was speedily answered in the large increase of the number of students for the ministry, so that it soon became possible for the Church to man all its pulpits, and to give large and valuable help to other evangelical Churches.

CHAPTER III.

SLAVERY.

THAT word "slavery," which now has such immeasurable significance of sin and shame and horror and blood, has acquired a greatly enlarged definition since the beginning of Methodist history in America.

For the first few years that great revival movement gathered the majority of its trophies in the slave states of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina: masters and slaves alike coming under its heavenly power. Indeed, as Dr. Sherman suggests in his most careful résumé of the History of the Discipline, the success of the gospel among both these classes came to be one of the chief embarrassments of the situation. It does not appear that colored persons were admitted to membership of the societies on equal terms with white people; but services were held for their especial benefit. A few of them, among whom was Black Harry Hosier, Bishop Asbury's faithful and eloquent servant, were allowed to act as local preachers. Thus the good work went forward for more than fifty years in a degree of peace and quietness, not even broken off by that seven years' misery—to wit, the war of the Revolution. That was a fight for liberty, it is true; but it was liberty for white men only, and this the slaves came fully to understand.

Those slaveholders with whom the preachers first and most came in contact were thoughtful of the spiritual needs of their servants; and so high was the estimate of their Christian character that the ownership of slaves was no bar to their membership in the Methodist societies. It was to have been expected that the English preachers would look with displeasure upon an institution which had never existed in Great Britain, and which was finally banished from her West India colonies; and Bishop Coke on several occasions narrowly escaped personal violence for denouncing the holding of human beings in bondage. But he was so greatly British and so little

American, and, withal, was so slightly acquainted with those Methodists who were slaveholders, that his remarks were one-sided, dealing with slavery in the abstract rather than with the actually existing situation. He also made the mistake of omitting to notice the New Testament directions to slaves concerning their duties towards their masters, on which account he was thought to be stirring up the Negroes to insurrection. It was, no doubt, on this account that, after one of his anti-slavery discourses, a woman who had been in the congregation offered to give any one fifty pounds who would take Dr. Coke and give him a hundred lashes.

But Asbury and most of the preachers under him, although they hated slavery from the bottom of their hearts, had at first no serious difficulty on account of it, and in spite of it great revivals of religion were enjoyed. Many good men in the south had begun to think of slavery as a burden rather than an advantage; but it was a patriarchal institution, and was recognized in the Decalogue, wherein a man-servant and a maid-servant were specified as property, not to be coveted from one's neighbor. It had existed in Israel, whose people were authorized to buy bondmen and bondmaids from the heathen nations round about them, though not from their brethren of the house of Jacob. Nor were there any specific commandments against it in the New Testament; but St. Paul had commanded Timothy to teach such servants as were "under the yoke" to "count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." Besides, the men of that generation were not responsible for the existence of slavery in America; and since the revival wave swept over slave states as well as free states, it is not surprising that those good men did not feel that the holding of slaves ought to be a bar to Christian fellowship, nor yet to the ministry of the gospel.

Even the great George Whitefield, on whose plantation and orphanage in Georgia slavery had at first been prohibited, afterwards sought for an amendment to his charter by which it should be permitted. With such a faint conscience against it on the part of truly pious men, perhaps it is fair to conclude that the facts concerning the institution which came to the knowledge of the English preachers in those days were less

stirring and tragic than those which afterwards led to the great Civil War. The first official notice of this evil appears in the action of the annual conference held at Baltimore in 1780, as follows:

"*Ques. 16.* Ought not this Conference to require those traveling preachers who hold slaves to give promise to set them free?

"*Ans.* Yes."

There is no accessible record as to who those traveling preachers were who were rich enough to own Negroes; nor yet who were the local preachers who, at sessions shortly following that of 1780, were laid under special requirements to provide for the emancipation of their slaves in those states where the laws would admit of it.

There must have been at that period a growing anti-slavery sentiment in the conferences, and the discussion of the subject must have been regarded by the societies, many of which were in slave territory, as right and proper. Hence, in the Discipline of 1784 appears the following:

"*Ques. 12.* What shall we do with our friends that will buy and sell slaves?

"*Ans.* If they buy with no other design than to hold them as slaves, and have been previously warned, they shall be expelled; and permitted to sell on no consideration.

"*Ques. 13.* What shall we do with our local preachers who will not emancipate their slaves in the states where the laws admit of it?

"*Ans.* Try those in Virginia another year; and suspend the preachers in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey."

Such mild measures on this question compare strangely with the sharp penalties threatened against preachers who presumed to celebrate the ordinances of the gospel contrary to the order of the Prayer Book of the Church of England, and against the members of society who distilled grain into liquor, both of which classes of offenders were to be excommunicated and disowned. In 1785 the rule against slavery was suspended; but the rules against distillation and against meddling with the prerogatives of the English clergy were continued.

The General Conference of 1796 restored and enlarged the rule against slavery, including all the former provisions, and designating the ages at which the children of slave mothers,

whose future manumission had been provided for, should be free; viz., every male at twenty-five, and every female at twenty-one years of age. This, however, was not intended to be definite and final, for the subject was referred to "all the yearly conferences, to make whatever regulations they judge proper in this case respecting the admission of persons to official stations in the Church."

The undecided state of mind in that assembly still further appears in the final paragraph of the chapter above quoted; in which the preachers and members of society are "requested to consider the subject of Negro slavery with deep attention till the ensuing General Conference; and that they impart to the General Conference any important thoughts upon the subject. But no "important thoughts" were forthcoming at the ensuing General Conference, nor yet at that of 1804; hence in 1808 nearly all the additions to the section on slavery made in 1796 were stricken out, and the entire section ordered to be omitted from the special edition of the Discipline which was to be prepared for the use of the societies in South Carolina. (Sherman's "History of the Discipline," pp. 35 and 36.)

On this mixed business Jesse Lee has the following remarks:

"These rules were but short-lived, and were offensive to most of our southern friends. . . . They were never carried into full force. . . . The part retained in our Discipline only relates at present to our traveling preachers, and such other persons as are to be brought forward to official stations in our Church. I shall therefore take no further notice of the rules about slavery which were made at various times for twenty-four years; *i. e.*, from the Christmas Conference in 1784 to the last General Conference held in 1808. For a long experience has taught us that the various rules that have been made on this business have not been attended with that success which was expected." ("Short History of the Methodists," page 102.)

The chapter on slavery to which Lee refers in the above quotation, and which, with few changes, remained in the Discipline from 1824 to 1860, was as follows:

OF SLAVERY.

"*Ques.* What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?

"*Ans. 1.* We declare that we are as much as ever convinced

of the great evil of slavery; therefore, no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter where the laws of the state in which he lives will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom.

"*Ans.* 2. When any traveling preacher becomes the owner of a slave or slaves, by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our Church, unless he execute, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the state in which he lives."

"*Ans.* 3. (Added in 1824.) All our preachers shall prudently enforce upon our members the necessity of teaching their slaves to read the Word of God, and to allow them to attend upon the public worship of God on our regular days of divine service."

"*Ans.* 4. Our colored preachers and official members shall have all the privileges which are usual to others in the district and quarterly conferences, where the usages of the country do not forbid it. And the presiding elder may hold for them a separate district conference where the number of colored local preachers will justify it."

"*Ans.* 5. The bishops may employ colored preachers to travel and preach when their services are judged necessary; provided, that no one shall be so employed without having been recommended by a quarterly conference."

That the anti-slavery sentiment was still alive appears from the fact that at the General Conference of 1832 a committee was appointed to look into the condition of the slaves, but when their report was presented it was promptly laid on the table, from which harmless position it never was taken up.

And now begins that period of conflict by which, as by a vast earthquake, Methodism in America was rent asunder. A brief digression is here necessary in order to a full understanding of extracts from the Minutes of the General Conferences of 1836, 1840, and 1844. Perhaps the time has come when the actual state of affairs in the Colonies of America in respect to slavery can be plainly stated and calmly considered. That institution has perished, though many of its results remain. The awful war in which, as an incidental effect, it went down is now among things remote in this fast-rushing age, and the Church is now, by reason of its division on that line, better able to face the anterior and interior facts to which these pages relate.

First of all, it must be remembered that the slave-trade was in full operation at the time when the Methodists began to be known on this side of the Atlantic. For many years all the

Colonies along the western shore of that ocean owned and traded in slaves brought from Africa, the most of this traffic being carried on by the northern colonies, because they owned a large majority of all the colonial ships. There are persons now living who well remember the slaves in the households of their parents, and those of their neighbors in the state of Massachusetts; for it was not until 1808 that the provision in the Constitution of the United States came into effect, by which the slave-trade was made a crime.

The chief finanical profits of slavery in the north having been in the trade and not in the use of slaves, while in the south the reverse was true, the natural result followed. Slavery gradually moved southward. It was by no means on account of any conviction of conscience on the part of the people of New England that this transition came about. This appears from the fact that at the Constitutional Convention, composed of delegates from the thirteen states of the Union, which met at Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, the subject of slavery was referred to two committees in succession; the first being composed of three northern and two southern men, and the second having a majority from the south. The first of these committees reported, August 8, 1787, a recommendation that the slave-trade be legalized perpetually; the second that it should not be extended beyond the year 1800. In his note on this subject, at the foot of page 386, of his "History of Methodism," Bishop McTyeire says:

> **"The constitutional provisions on this head would never have prolonged this infamous traffic to the year 1808 if either Massachusetts or New Hampshire or Connecticut had stood by Delaware and Virginia in that crisis of the country, and, like them, voted against the extension."**

In treating of the origin of the struggle over slavery in the Methodist Church, it has been customary to say that the conscience of the Church in the north was being awakened to the evil of the institution of slavery. But this is not strictly correct. Conscience has its legitimate action in relation to moral questions, and to the conduct of the person who possesses it. To speak of a conscience against the sins of others is a misuse

of the word. Perhaps the cheapest form of piety is that which consists in disapprobation of other people's sins. This form of conscience had been growing more and more intense in the north against the sins of the people of the south; and this was the kind of conscience, as the southern Methodist slaveholders understood it, which led to the agitation on that very sensitive topic, and which, in the month of December, 1833, led to the organization of the National Anti-slavery Society in the city of Philadelphia.

The northern leaders in the interest of "immediate emancipation," of whom the chief Methodist was a New England presiding elder named Orange Scott, had nothing to gain by the continuance of slavery, and nothing to lose by its destruction. In these respects their position was the reverse from that of their slaveholding brethren of the south. This gave a free hand to the one party; but was a question of financial life or death to the other. It does not appear that the New England abolitionists, who were so fond of referring to the extinction of slavery by Great Britain in the West Indies, ever hinted at the propriety of following her example in the manner of that great reform; viz., the partial compensation of the masters whose slaves were then set free.

One more important view of this unhappy subject, which must have had much weight with the southern Methodists, was the bitter denunciation of the Churches, especially the northern Churches, for their intense conservatism on the subject of this great national crime. William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Parker, and men of that stamp, were as violent in their attacks upon the Churches as they were upon slavery itself; while the religious education of the slaveholding Church members had given them to see that a Church in which both masters and slaves held communion together was quite according to the usage in apostolic times.

Now, in conclusion of this somewhat lengthy digression, let it be observed, without entering into the merits of that memorable debate which led to the great disruption, that all the above considerations must have held place in the very life-blood of the Methodists of the south. It is only just to them and to history, that these interior causes and reasons for their

action should be kept in mind. If both writer and reader of these pages shall be able to do this, the following brief record of the great Methodist ecclesiastical war will be of some substantial use.

At the opening of the General Conference of 1832 the Episcopal Address noted with pleasure the quieting of the agitation on the subject of slavery. But an event took place which was destined to be the means of renewing the strife; viz., the election of James O. Andrew, of Georgia, as one of the two new bishops. His colleague was John Emory, a native of Maryland, but at the date of his election a member of the Philadelphia Conference, and one of the Book Agents at New York.

That the agitation on the subject of slavery was partially "quieted" is evident from the election of these two bishops, both of whom were natives of slaveholding states, when out of the 202 members of the body 118 were of the non-slaveholding section of the Church. There was not even the regular Committee on Slavery.

But this was only the calm before the storm. In the New England delegation at the quiet General Conference of 1832 was a member whose name, during the few following years, came to be a firebrand. Orange Scott was a rising man in his conference. In 1834 he was made presiding elder of the Providence District (since erected into the Providence Conference), and served for two years with great success. It was during this time that the anti-slavery society, to which reference has already been made, was set on foot, and Mr. Scott shortly came to be one of its chief advocates, both by tongue and pen. Before the quadrennium rolled round he had made converts of a large majority of the members of his conference, and was elected to the General Conference of 1836, which was to meet in a border city, at the head of his delegation.

At that date the number of so-called "abolitionists" in the Methodist Church was small; but Scott traveled through New England and a part of New York, giving fiery lectures, organizing local clubs whose object was to agitate for "immediate emancipation" of all the slaves, and attending sessions of annual conferences in which he secured the establishment of conference anti-slavery societies.

The General Conference of 1836 opened in the city of Cincinnati, on Monday, the 2d of May. The bishops were Roberts, Soule, Hedding, and Andrew. Roberts was born in Maryland. He was of a kind and placid temper, and little was heard of him in reference to the great agitation in the Church. Soule was of northern birth and education, but somehow had obtained a southern heart. Hedding was from the valley of the Hudson; but, like Bangs and Fisk and Whedon, was an anti-abolitionist. Andrew was southern. His course was along the natural line of his birth and education.

The body was composed of 146 delegates from 22 annual conferences, 90 members from free state conferences, and 56 from slave state conferences.

On the 12th of May, S. G. Roszel, of the Baltimore conference, brought forward, as heretofore mentioned, resolutions of censure against two of the northern delegates, who had been guilty of attending and addressing a meeting of the Cincinnati Anti-slavery Society.

The fact alluded to in these resolutions of censure was, that William H. Norris, of the Maine Conference, and George Storrs, of the New Hampshire conference, both well-known abolitionists in their respective locations, had attended a regular weekly meeting of the society above-mentioned, and their remarks were so well received that they resulted in the addition of fifteen members to the society.

Over these resolutions the combat raged for two days, with the result that they were adopted, with the addition of a third resolution directing that "the foregoing preamble and resolutions be published in our periodicals."

The temper of the pro-slavery side of the debate may be understood from the remark of William A. Smith, of Virginia, in favor of a proposed amendment which called for the publication of the names of the two active abolitionists. "Let them," said he, "be brought forth in all the length and breadth of their damning iniquity." But the amendment failed to be adopted.

It was now seen that there was work for a Committee on Slavery, and such a one was appointed, to which was referred a number of abolitionist petitions from the New England section of the Church. But the most interesting matter laid before

them was the following, offered by William Winans, of Mississippi, and seconded by Jonathan Stamper, of Kentucky:

"*Resolved*, That a pamphlet circulated among the members of this Conference, purporting to be 'An Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by a member of that body,' containing reports of the discussion on modern abolitionism palpably false, and calculated to make an impression to the injury of some of the members engaged in the aforesaid discussion, is an outrage on the dignity of this body and meriting unqualified reprehension."

The mover then proceeded to pour out the vials of his wrath against the unknown author of this seditious pamphlet. When he sat down Orange Scott arose, and announced that he was the author in question. No full report of the speech in which Scott defended himself is accessible in any of our Church journals; but the wide range of the debate may be gathered from the fact that the power of Congress over the existence of slavery in the District of Columbia, which the north affirmed and the south denied, was one of the chief questions traversed.

When the Winans resolution came to a vote, Scott moved as an amendment that his own name be inserted therein in place of the words, "by a member of that body." This was not agreed to; but after many severe remarks against him, the resolution was passed by a vote of 97 yeas to 19 nays. This vote shows how weak was the northern majority of the body, as against the determined and united southern minority. Notwithstanding the large number of ministers and members of the Church in New England who were on the abolitionist side, Orange Scott comprised in himself alone almost the whole of the anti-slavery party in the General Conference of 1836.

It should be noted in this connection that on his return to his New England home his conference passed his character, and the editor of *Zion's Herald* wrote him a note, congratulating him on the noble and dignified stand he had taken in the General Conference, saying, "Every lover of human rights will honor and bless you for not having flinched in the hour of trial."

Near the close of the session the Committee on Slavery reported, for substance, that it was not advisable to meddle with the Chapter on Slavery as it then stood in the Discipline, and the Conference adjourned, its members carrying home with them a vague sense of the impending struggle which, at no distant day, was destined to rend the Church in twain.

These pages do not purport to give a history of the progress of the "irrepressible conflict" during the interim of the quadrennial sessions of the General Conference, but a brief reference to the doings in some of the annual conferences between 1836 and 1840 is needed, in order to a better presentation of the subject in hand.

At the session of 1836 in the Pastoral Address of the Bishops these words occurred:

> **"We have been agitated much on some portions of our work with the very excitable subject of what is called Abolitionism. . . . From every view of the subject which we have been able to take, and from the most calm and dispassionate survey of the ground, we have come to the solemn conviction that the only safe, Scriptural, and prudent way for us, both as ministers and people, to take, is wholly to refrain from this agitating subject."**

From what soon followed it would appear that the bishops were inclined to take their own official advice as a part of the law of the Church, for they at once proceeded to enforce the above-mentioned "solemn conviction" upon the annual conferences over which they presided. For example: At the next ensuing session of the New England Conference Bishop Hedding informed Orange Scott that he would not be reappointed as presiding elder of the Providence District unless he would pledge himself to refrain from lecturing and writing on the subject of slavery. This action led the offending brother, not long after, to accept an agency for the National Anti-slavery Society, and ultimately drove him out of the Church along with that band of secessionists who afterward formed the Wesleyan Methodist Connection.

At the same session a Committee on Slavery was appointed; but when their report was presented the bishop refused to have it read. In like manner Bishops Andrew and Waugh—the lat-

ter being one of the new general superintendents elected at the General Conference of 1836—acted on the authority of their "solemn conviction" in the northern conferences held by them, refusing to receive reports or put motions unfriendly to slavery, though in conferences at the south they made no objection to similar proposed action against abolitionism. The subject is a painful one, and brevity in the treatment of it is best. But, as can be readily seen, the efforts of the bishops to stop agitation by assuming powers which were never committed to them, only added fuel to the fire, until it set the whole Church ablaze.

The General Conference of 1840 was held in Baltimore, Bishops Roberts, Hedding, Andrew, Waugh, and Morris presiding. The senior Bishop Soule was absent at first, apparently on account of sickness. Bishop Andrew was also absent for a time, but both appeared later in the session. The Conference was composed of 143 members, representing 28 annual conferences. Of this number, 94 were from conferences in free states, and 49 from conferences in slave states. Thus if the question of slavery had been a geographical one, the strength of the Conference in favor of abolition ought to have been nearly two to one; but notwithstanding this heavy majority, the northern men were not able to control the action of the body. During the entire quadrennium there had been such an increasing excitement on the subject of abolition in New England, especially within the territory comprised in the New England Conference, that it was expected on all hands that the session of 1840 would witness a severe conflict between the two opposing parties.

The Committee on Slavery was composed of twenty-eight members, and contains some historic names: Nathan Bangs, of New York, chairman of the committee; George Peck, secretary; Orange Scott, the prominent anti-slavery agitator from the New England Conference; Leonidas L. Hamline, H. B. Bascom, and W. M. Wightman. Three of these, Hamline, Bascom, and Wightman, reached the episcopal chair; Hamline in the old Church, and Bascom and Wightman in the Church South. Waugh was strongly conservative. Thus the weight of the episcopal influence was heavily on the conservative side.

The Bishops' Address, which was a lengthy document, requiring an hour and three-quarters for delivery, treated, as by

necessity, upon the subject of slavery. Among other things it said:

"We regret that we are compelled to say that in some of the northern and eastern conferences, in contravention of your Christian counsel and of our best efforts to carry it into effect, this subject (of slavery) has been agitated in such forms and in such a spirit as to disturb the peace of the Church. This unhappy agitation has not been confined to your annual conferences, but has been introduced into the quarterly conferences, and made the absorbing business of self-created bodies in the bosom of our beloved Zion. The proposed object of these operations is to free the Methodist Episcopal Church from the 'great moral evil of slavery,' and to secure to the enslaved the rights and privileges of free citizens of these states. How far the measures adopted, and the manner of applying these measures, are calculated to accomplish such an issue, even if it could be benefited by any action of ecclesiastical bodies, your united wisdom will enable you to judge.

"The result of action had in some conferences on the resolution of the New England Conference, recommending a very important change in our General Rule on Slavery, affords us strong and increasing confidence that the unity and peace of the Church are not to be materially affected by this exciting subject. Many of the preachers who were favorably disposed to the cause of abolition, when they saw the extent to which it was designed to carry these measures, and the inevitable consequences of their prosecution, came to a pause, reflected, and declined their co-operation.

"Our General Rule on Slavery, which forms a part of the constitution of the Church, has stood from the beginning unchanged, as testamentary of our sentiments on the principle of slavery and the slave-trade; and in this we differ in no respect from the sentiments of our venerable founder, or from those of the wisest and most distinguished statesmen and civilians of our own and other enlightened Christian countries.

"In all the enactments of the Church relating to slavery a due and respectful regard has been had to the laws of the states; never requiring emancipation in contravention of the civil authority, or where the laws of the states would not allow liberated slaves to enjoy freedom.

"The simply holding or owning slaves, without regard to circumstances, has at no period of the existence of the Church subjected the master to excommunication. Rules have been made from time to time regulating the sale and purchase and holding of slaves, with reference to the different laws of the states where slavery is tolerated, which, upon the experience of the great difficulties of administering them, and the unhappy consequences both to masters and servants, have been as often changed or repealed.

"We can not withhold from you the solemn conviction of our minds that no new ecclesiastical legislation on the subject of slavery at this time will have a tendency to accomplish these most desirable objects; viz., to preserve the peace and unity of the whole body; to procure the greatest happiness of the slave population, and advance generally in the slaveholding community of our country the humane and hallowing influence of our holy religion. And we are fully persuaded that as a body of Christian ministers we shall accomplish the greatest good by directing our individual and united efforts, in the spirit of the first teachers of Christianity, to bring both master and servant under the sanctifying influence of the principles of that gospel which teaches the duties of every relation, and enforces the faithful discharge of them by the strongest possible motives."

These calm words from the chief pastors appear to have expressed the sense of nearly all the southern delegates, and, perhaps, of a majority of northern delegates also; but the reformers had come to the Conference bent on making a demonstration of their sentiments, and they had not long to wait for their opportunity. On his way to the seat of the session, Orange Scott had met one of his friends in New York, who had placed in his hands a memorial to the General Conference against slavery, purporting to be signed by over eleven hundred Methodists of that city and vicinity. Its reading caused no little surprise. It was the heaviest shot from the batteries of the abolitionists that had been fired in all the history of the campaign.

The body had at first refused to appoint a Committee on Slavery; but now nothing else would meet the case. The committee was formed, with Dr. Bangs, leader of the New York conference delegation, for its chairman, and to it the startling memorial was referred. The fact that the paper was sent to the Conference by one who was not a member of the New York delegation awoke suspicions as to its genuineness. Hearing of its presentation, a committee of thirty was hastily formed of the anti-abolitionists in the New York Churches, which at once proceeded to sift the mass of signatures to the document, which had been sent to them by Chairman Bangs for that purpose. The results of this search were such that the committee of thirty sent a protest to the Conference against the reception of the Scott memorial, reciting the facts which their hasty canvass

of New York Methodism had brought out; and this protest was presented to the body in due course as a part of the report of the Committee on Slavery, from which the following extracts are made:

"It is with deep humiliation we find ourselves compelled, from the testimony adduced in said Protest and its accompanying documents, to believe that unworthy and even fraudulent means were resorted to in procuring the signatures of said Memorial.

"The Memorial declares that the eleven hundred and fifty-four signers whose names are appended to it are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of New York and its vicinity. Whereas, it appears from the document referred to us that forty-five are not members at all; one is now, and another has been, in the state's prison; and fifteen are probationers, one of whom is only seven years of age. Of those who are members, seventy-eight names are recorded twice; one thrice; ninety are forged; there are fifty-eight whose residences are not put down; twenty-three can not be found in the residences named in the memorial; sixty have declared that they were deceived by various false pretenses; making in all three hundred and ninety-six, which must be deducted from the whole number of signers. Of the entire number, eight hundred and thirteen are females, and it is in evidence that in several instances whole families were set down. The committee of investigation called on less than one-half of the persons whose names are found in the Memorial, and the conclusion is fully warranted that on a more thorough examination many more would be found to be fabricated signatures obtained by false pretenses. We are very glad to know that the two persons actively engaged in the disgraceful work are not members of our Church.

"From all these facts the committee are induced respectfully to submit the following resolutions:

"1. That the numerous frauds manifestly resorted to by those who obtained the signatures to the memorial on slavery from the city of New York, presented to this Conference by Orange Scott, render it unworthy of credit."

If the report had stopped at that point it might have been adopted; but the committee attempted to take advantage of the delicate situation in which the leader of the abolitionists had innocently placed himself, and get in a blow at the heart of the subject itself. It therefore goes on to say:

"In further prosecution of their duty the committee ask permission to submit the following as the conclusion of their report:

"WHEREAS, Our Church in various places has been much agi-

tated on the subject of modern abolitionism for several years past; and

"WHEREAS, It is most desirable to tranquillize these troubled waters, that we may pursue our appropriate calling in peace and harmony; therefore,

"*Resolved*, By the delegates of the several annual conferences in General Conference assembled, 1. That it is incompatible with our duty as Christians and Christian ministers to agitate the Church on the above subject any further than we feel ourselves bound to express our individual opinions on proper occasions in suitable language, and with deference and respect for the opinions and characters of those from whom we may conscientiously differ.

"*Resolved*, 2. That we highly disapprove of the conduct of those who would disturb the peace of the Church . . . by forming anti-slavery societies or conventions in the Church, and giving them currency by taking the names of Methodists, or by bringing the doctrines of modern abolitionism into quarterly and annual conferences, class, and other meetings of devotion. And more especially do we condemn the practice of arraigning the characters of individuals, bishops, and other ministers and members of the Church, through the medium of the press, before they have been dealt with as the Sacred Scriptures and the Discipline of our Church most explicitly require.

"*Resolved*, 3. That it be, and hereby is, made the duty of all the annual conferences, bishops, presiding elders, and preachers to use their influences to banish the above practices from among us.

"All of which is respectfully submitted.

"N. BANGS, *Chairman*."

But the committee miscalculated their strength. The body was very evenly divided on the general subjects, and when the report came up for final action it was read and laid on the table. (Minutes of General Conference of 1840, page 82.)

Another great contest in the General Conference of 1840 was over the appeal from the action of the Missouri Conference, which had censured one of its ministers, Silas Comfort by name, for admitting the testimony of a colored boy at a Church trial against a white member of the Church. This, of course, in the slave state of Missouri was illegal; but there was a party in the Church which objected to having the rules of civil courts made binding in ecclesiastical trials, and the case afforded an opportunity to the abolitionists to express their sentiments respecting the equal rights of men as men.

It was during the struggle over the anterior question raised by this appeal that the first recorded threats of disruption were

ever heard in a General Conference. After some sharp debate, Ignatius A. Few, of Georgia, offered a resolution which affirmed that, in the judgment of the General Conference, colored men were not entitled to testify against white men in states where their testimony was not admissible in courts of law. This resolution was passed by a very close vote; but, later on, the reformers determined if possible to reverse that conservative action, and moved a reconsideration. Such a motion was then held to be debatable.

In defense of his resolution, Dr. Few made a notable speech, concluding as follows:

"The decision of this Conference reversing that of the Missouri Conference, and going to say that Negro testimony against white members might be received in Church trials, has gone through the length and breadth of the land, and is working its desolating effects. It would therefore be madness to withhold the antidote. If you are prepared to say that the principle of the resolution is indefensible, then you who profess to be the moderate party are prepared to say that all who are connected with the system of slavery are sinners, root and branch before high heaven. Are you afraid of bringing down upon you the wrath of the abolitionists, that you wish to rescind this resolution? And to secure their favor, are you willing to do an act which shall encourage the slave to plunge his knife in the heart of his master, with the hope of having his name emblazoned on the page of history along with that of Brutus?

"I am tired of this agitation. If you will push this thing, let us go. It is not our fault; we have not agitated it. We have sent up no memorials or petitions. We who believe that to preach the Word of Jesus Christ is the grand means of saving the slave, have never troubled you. Let us go. This is the Rubicon, sir. I announce it seriously. This is the Rubicon! Pass it not!"

The next speaker was William Winans, of Mississippi, who also opposed the reconsideration. The conclusion of his speech was as follows:

"It is a matter of life and death with us, sir. Pause, I beseech you. You may rescind this resolution; but we can bear this. We may be hunted from our homes and hearths; but we can bear this. We may be put to death; but we could bear this for the sake of the Lord Jesus. We might emigrate; we are a migratory people, and might go where we would not be thus thwarted, while we are executing our commission as Christ's ministers. But the poor blacks! I know them, sir. I have been thirty years laboring with them, and the rescinding of this resolution will bar all access to

them, and snatch the bread of life from their lips. It will do it, sir; it will. I could on my bended knees beseech you by the wants—the spiritual wants—of famishing thousands, do not repeal this resolution."

It was the same old horror. The slave must be kept down, or he will become dangerous. And it was also the self-same kindness of a good master towards his servants. Many Methodists had liberated their slaves under the urgent entreaties of the earlier preachers; but in the turn which affairs were now taking the vast majority of masters were likely, for resentment as well as for self-protection against impending danger, to abridge the poor liberties allowed on their plantations; and especially to shut out the Methodist preachers from work among them. For who could tell whether some meek-looking itinerant on a southern circuit might not be an abolitionist in disguise?

The final vote on the question was taken on a substitute for the resolution of Dr. Few, of Georgia, offered by W. A. Smith, of Virginia, as follows:

"*Resolved*, That it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher among us to admit persons of color to give testimony on the trial of white persons in any slaveholding state or territory where they are denied that privilege in trials at law; provided, that when an annual conference in any such state or territory shall judge it expedient to admit of the introduction of such testimony within its bounds it shall be allowed to do so."

On this substitute the yeas and nays were taken, resulting in a tie, 69 yeas and 69 nays. The presiding officer, Bishop Hedding, declined to give the casting vote, but decided that the resolution, not having a majority, had failed. Thus narrowly was Dr. Few's resolution saved.

Not satisfied with this result, Bishop Soule at the afternoon session of June 2d offered some explanatory resolutions, affirming that the action of the General Conference on the resolution of Dr. Few relative to the appeal of Silas Comfort, of the Missouri Conference, was not intended to order any change in the usages of the annual conferences on the subject of admitting colored persons to testify in the trial of white members of the Church; also affirming confidence and brotherly love toward the colored members of the Church. His resolutions were adopted by a vote of 97 to 27. Thus the position of the Church on this vexed question remained unchanged.

Another matter that caused no little contention was the report of the Committee on the Itinerancy, concerning the journals of the New England Conference. It was as follows:

"The New England Conference, as has appeared to the committee, have been during the last four years disorganizing in their proceedings, and appear to have pursued a course destructive to the peace, harmony, and unity of the Church.

"1. They have done so when they have gone beyond the proper jurisdiction of an annual conference, and pronounced upon the characters of brethren who are not at all responsible to them.

"2. The journals of that conference exhibit no grounds on which they acquitted Orange Scott, who, by direct implication, had been found guilty, by a large majority of the last General Conference, of publishing statements concerning members of that body, which were gross misrepresentations, or flagrant and scandalous falsehoods.

"3. The same absence exists of all showing of reasons for acquitting Orange Scott and La Roy Sunderland on charges of evildoing, growing out of abolition agitation in which they were engaged. . . ."

Pending the vote, Bishop Hedding, who had spent much of his life in New England, earnestly entreated that the severe censure passed upon the New England Conference might be omitted from the report. Against this some of the southern delegates protested, declaring that the facts were as stated in the report; that the action of the conference in question had been "disorganizing," and that "such action must inevitably sunder the Church." After much dispute, ominous of the earthquake that was coming four years later, the request of Bishop Hedding was acceded to, and the report was adopted without the sharp censure of the New England Conference.

Among other persuasive words the bishop had said: "The excitement in the north is diminishing, and if we do nothing to revive it, it is hoped that it may die away." Vain hope! Abolition or disruption was the sole alternative forced upon the Church, only one of which events was possible. There was, indeed, a poor affair in existence, to wit: The American Colonization Society, whose proposal was to assist in sending the slaves back to Africa—a scheme about as sensible as would be a proposition now to send all Hibernians back to Ireland, or all the Germans back to Fatherland.

CHAPTER IV.

SLAVERY (Continued).

THE period between the General Conferences of 1840 and 1844 has a very significant history. The discouragement of the reformers over the action, or rather the non-action, of the Conference of 1840, from which they had hoped so much and realized so little, was intense. Even the eloquent and enthusiastic Orange Scott was led to the conclusion that action by the Church was hopeless without the action of the state. Thence came the movement for the secession of that considerable body which in 1842 organized themselves under the name of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, of which Scott was one of the leaders. This new body retained the doctrines and some of the discipline of the parent Church; but, of course, made the holding of slaves a bar to membership. They prospered in a small way. During the quadrennium from 1840 to 1844 about twenty thousand Methodists left the old Church and joined the new.

For a time this relieved the pressure of the high contention on slavery, and it is affirmed that the event was followed by a period of unprecedented prosperity, during which the increase in the Church far exceeded anything known in its previous history, the gain in membership for the four years being more than three hundred and fifty thousand." (McTyeire's "History of Methodism," page 612.) The bishop quotes in this connection a text from the Acts of the Apostles: "Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified."

But it is not safe to draw conclusions concerning the Divine purpose from Divine providence alone. Now, as in the instance above cited, the "rest" was for no great length of time.

The memorable General Conference of 1844 assembled in the Greene Street Church, in the city of New York, on Wednesday, the 1st of May, Bishops Soule, Hedding, Andrew, Waugh, and Morris being present. The entire number of delegates was

171. Of these, 119 were from annual conferences in free states, and 52 from those in slave states. These figures were portentous of war, and of a war that was almost certain to end in the carrying out of the threat made by the southern men in the General Conference of 1840.

In spite of the departure of the Wesleyans, the free states had gained heavily on the slave states, so that when the General Conference of 1844 had been fully set in array it was evident that "the Rubicon" was now reached, and would undoubtedly be crossed. As in former sessions, the line of separation between conservatives and radicals on the slavery question was not the geographical one; but that state of the case had been much more nearly reached than in the session of 1840.

ABOLITIONISM.

The anti-slavery men had no longer a fiery leader like Orange Scott. Calmer counsels had prevailed; but the calmness was a real gain to their cause.

An awful sense of the situation seemed to pervade the assembly, which was heightened by the request of the bishops that the Episcopal Address might be read with closed doors, which was done. But that document, instead of dealing chiefly with the subject which was uppermost in all minds, dwelt largely upon the position and prerogatives of the bishops themselves. This matter, no doubt, had been impressed upon their attention by their stormy experiences in some of the northern conferences, in which they had attempted to lead or control the proceedings in the interest of peace.

On the third day of the session a memorial from the Providence Conference was presented by Frederick Upham, which in very incisive language made an attack on slavery. In announcing the usual committees none had been appointed on slavery; but now, on motion of John A. Collins, of Baltimore, such a committee was raised, consisting of one member from each annual conference. If this committee actually considered all the anti-slavery documents poured in upon them, they must have been a very hard-working body. There were no less than thirty memorials, protests, etc., from Churches in the New

Hampshire Conference alone. They were of various kinds. Some contained censures on the conservative action of the bishops in their efforts to keep down abolition excitement; some denounced the attitude of the Church on slavery; some fought over again the battle of 1840, on the admission of testimony of colored persons in trials of white members of the Church; while others denounced in no gentle terms the iniquity of slavery itself, and insisted that no person guilty of the sin of slaveholding was fit for the fellowship of any Christian communion. The chairman of this committee was George Peck, of New York. Next to him was that distinguished Methodist historian, Abel Stevens; but he, being only an alternate, soon gave place to his principal, on that member's appearance.

The first great contention of the session was over the appeal of Francis A. Harding from the action of the Baltimore Conference, by which body he had been expelled "for refusing to manumit certain slaves which came into his possession by his marriage." It appeared in evidence that by the laws of Maryland the title and ownership inhered in the wife, and that a slave could not be emancipated and continue to reside in the state. On the other hand, it was contended that the appellant knew that the Baltimore Conference did not tolerate slaveholding on the part of its members. Besides, there was plenty of free territory to which the offending brother might have removed. Therefore, the appeal was dismissed, by a vote of 117 to 56.

It may seem strange that the Baltimore Conference, which, as has been seen, was a mixed conference, should have made such stringent regulations as those under which Harding had been expelled. But it is said by some who can recall the events of that period, that the anti-slavery sentiments of men of southern birth and education, when once they had come to realize the wickedness of slavery, were more intense than in the case of northern abolitionists, who knew nothing of the institution by observation and experience. Hence, doubtless, the fact that two members of the Baltimore delegation led off in the bitter fight over the suspension of Bishop Andrew from the functions of the episcopal office.

This was the fall of the shadow of impending doom. Be-

hind the case of Harding was that of Bishop Andrew, who, by bequest as well as by marriage, had come to be a slaveholder. If the General Conference did not spare the preacher, could they be expected to spare the bishop? And the anti-slavery majority was so hopelessly strong! No wonder that the southern delegations began to gather their robes about them in preparation for their sad departure.

But the south would make one more effort in the direction of preserving the unity of the Church. Some of them, as already seen, had in 1840 thrown out threats of dissolution if the abolitionists did not cease their agitation; but now, when they were brought face to face with that awful catastrophe, the best men among them held their breath. It was the calm and gentle Dr. Capers, of South Carolina, one of the missionary secretaries of the Church, a man beloved and trusted both by north and south, who at that portentous hour moved the following preamble and resolutions:

"In view of the distracting agitation which has so long prevailed on the subject of slavery and abolition, and especially the difficulties under which we labor in the present General Conference on account of the relative position of our brethren North and South on this perplexing question; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That a committee of six be appointed to confer with the bishops, and report within two days, as to the possibility of adopting some plan, and what, for the permanent pacification of the Church."

The resolution was seconded by Dr. Olin, of New York, the distinguished southern scholar and orator, who had succeeded Wilbur Fisk in the presidency of the Wesleyan University at Middletown, Conn. The motion prevailed, and the following brethren were named as the committee: Dr. Capers, of South Carolina; Dr. Olin, of New York; William Winans, of Mississippi; John Early, of Virginia; Leonidas L. Hamline, of Ohio; and Phineas Crandall, of Massachusetts. In seconding the resolution offered by Dr. Capers—who shortly became a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South—Dr. Olin said:

". . . It appears to me that we stand committed on this question by our principles and views of policy, and neither of us dare move a step from our position. Let us keep away from the controversy until brethren from opposite sides have come together. I

confess I turn away from it with sorrow, and a deep feeling of apprehension that the difficulties which are now upon us threaten to be unmanageable. I do, indeed, believe that if this General Conference do not speak out clearly and distinctly on the subject, however unpalatable it may be, we can not go home under this distracting question without a certainty of breaking up our conferences. . . . With regard to our southern brethren, if they concede what the northern brethren wish, if they concede that holding slaves is incompatible with holding their ministry, they may as well go to the Rocky Mountains as to their own sunny plains. . . . I see no way of escape. If we find any it will be by mutual moderation, in calling for help from the God of our fathers, and in looking upon each other as we were wont to do."

Dr. Olin's speech, from which only this brief extract can here find place, greatly moved and softened the hearts of the Conference. Under the hallowed hush produced by it, Dr. Durbin, who made his fame as missionary secretary, a delegate from the Philadelphia conference, moved that "to-morrow be observed as a day of fasting and humiliation before God, and prayer for a blessing upon the committee." The proposed religious observance of the day—Wednesday, May 15th—was modified into the form of a prayer-meeting for one hour, at the conclusion of the next day's session. A whole day for prayer was not according to the temper of the body. This service was held, after the earlier part of the morning had been largely occupied with presenting and reading another stream of anti-slavery documents. Four days later Bishop Soule reported to the Conference that the committee were "unable to agree upon any plan of compromise to reconcile the northern and southern conferences." The last hope of a united Church was gone.

The combat then went on. The next advance was a motion, by J. A. Collins, of the Baltimore Conference, requesting the Committee on Episcopacy "to ascertain the facts in the case of Bishop Andrew, and report the results of their investigations to-morrow morning." This was on the 22d of May. Accordingly, Dr. Robert Paine, of the Tennessee Conference, who was the chairman of that committee, made report that they had held an interview with Bishop Andrew, who had placed in their hands a statement of his case. This document stated that several years ago an old lady in Augusta, Ga., had bequeathed to him a mulatto girl in trust, with a view of sending her to

Liberia when she should reach the age of nineteen years. But if she should then refuse to go, the bishop was to "make her as free as the laws of the state of Georgia would permit." The girl having come of age, and having refused to go to Liberia, had been provided with a house, and had lived under the guardianship of the bishop as nearly like a free Negro as possible under the laws of that state.

Another item was as follows:

"About five years since the mother of my former wife left to her daughter, not to me, a Negro boy, and as my wife died without a will, more than two years since, by the laws of the state he became legally my property. In this case, as in the former, emancipation is impracticable in the state; but he shall be at liberty to leave the state whenever I shall be satisfied that he is prepared to provide for himself, or I can have sufficient security that he will be protected and provided for in the place to which he may go."

The third point in question was met by the statement that his second wife was the owner of slaves inherited from her former husband; and, as emancipation was illegal, he had conveyed to his wife all his legal rights in the slaves which had come to him by this marriage. "As to the servants owned by my wife," says the bishop, "I have no legal responsibility in the premises, nor could my wife emancipate them if she desired to do so." (See Minutes of General Conference 1844, page 63.)

The above statement, which the Committee on Episcopacy presented as their report, was made the order of the day for May 23d, at which time two more members of the Baltimore conference, Alfred Griffith and John Davis, brought forward the following preamble and resolution:

"WHEREAS, The Rev. James O. Andrew, one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, has become connected with slavery, as communicated in his statement in his reply to the inquiry of the Committee on Episcopacy, which reply is embodied in their Report No. 3, presented yesterday; and

"WHEREAS, It has been, from the origin of said Church, a settled policy and the invariable usage to elect no person to the office of bishop who was embarrassed with this 'great evil,' as under such circumstances it would be impossible for a bishop to exercise the functions and perform the duties assigned to a general

superintendent with acceptance in that large portion of his charge in which slavery does not exist; and

"WHEREAS, Bishop Andrew was himself nominated by our brethren of the slaveholding states, and elected by the General Conference of 1832, as a candidate who, though living in the midst of a slaveholding population, was nevertheless free from all personal connection with slavery; and

"WHEREAS, This is, of all periods in our history as a Church, the one least favorable to such an innovation upon the practice and usage of Methodism as to confide a part of the itinerant general superintendency to a slaveholder; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the Rev. James O. Andrew be, and he is hereby, affectionately requested to resign his office as one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

This singuar document was guilty of a grave discourtesy in addressing a bishop simply as "the Rev. James O. Andrew," thus assuming that his episcopal glory had already departed. Its strange request that the bishop would place himself on the altar as a sacrifice, when there was no disciplinary method of putting him out of his office, is another feature of the resolution which needs to be borne in mind.

That such action should have come from the Baltimore Conference, one-half of whose territory was slave, and the other half free, need not be matter of surprise. It was well understood that the Conference had never received a slaveholding preacher into its fellowship, and that in repeated instances it had expelled members for that offense, since it was possible under the laws of Maryland to emancipate slaves. Here, as elsewhere in slave territory, those who had come to be abolitionists were of the most determined sort, and hence there need be no surprise that the three men who took the lead in the attack on Bishop Andrew were three members of the Baltimore (border) conference.

The Griffith-Davis resolution was defended, first, on the ground that as the General Conference had given the office of bishop it had equal power and right to take it away. Second, "expediency" demanded that slavery and the Episcopacy should be absolutely separated from each other. Failure to obtain this result would work the ruin of the office and the Church, since a slaveholding bishop would not be tolerated in the northern conferences; third, it was argued that the usage of the Church

had been not to elect any man to the episcopate who was at all connected with slavery. It was claimed that James O. Andrew had been chosen from the south by reason of the fact that he was at that time free from any connection with slavery, and that to allow him to hold his office after he had become a slaveholder would be breaking over an established precedent.

There was at that time a provision in the Discipline, Chapter IX, Section 1, as follows:

"*Ques. 1.* To whom is the bishop amenable for his conduct?

"*Ans.* To the General Conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary." *

But under this rule it would, of course, have been essential to show that Bishop Andrew had been guilty of "improper conduct." But in the sense in which the phrase, "improper conduct" was understood, such an attempt was out of the question. Both the bishop and his wife were spoken of during the debate in highly complimentary terms, as the following from the concluding portion of the second speech of Dr. Olin will show. The Doctor began as follows:

"I believe we are all prepared to recognize the right of southern brethren to hold slaves under the provisions of the Discipline. . . . I am glad of the opportunity of saying that no man who is a Methodist, and deserves a place among us, can call in question here any rights secured by our charter. I do not say that he may not be a very honest, or a very pious man, who doubts the compatibility of slaveholding, on the conditions of the Discipline, with the ministerial office; but in this he is not a Methodist. He may be a very good man; but he is a very bad Methodist."

The speaker then paid a warm tribute of praise to Bishop Andrew, declaring him to be pre-eminently fitted for his great office, and saying:

"I know of no man who has been so bold an advocate for the interest of the slaves; and when I have been constrained to refrain from saying what perhaps I should have said, I have heard him at camp-meetings and on other public occasions call fearlessly on masters to see to the spiritual and temporal interests of their slaves as a high Christian duty."

* This last clause was changed in 1872, so as to read: "To the General Conference, who shall have power to order the manner of his trial."

The Doctor in conclusion indorsed the Finley-Trimble resolution as one which "proposes no punishment; it does not even censure. It expresses no opinion of the bishop's conduct. It only seeks to avert diastrous results by the exercise of the conservative, self-preserving powers of this Conference." This testimony to the high personal and official character of the bishop is valuable; but the vain attempt at making the proposed measure a basis of reconciliation only gained him the credit from the south of "speaking on both sides of the question."

It is pleasant to recall the fact that no word of complaint against Bishop Andrew or of his excellent wife was spoken in all the heat of that fiery debate. But in the minds of the majority of the house he had been guilty of an unpardonable sin; unless, indeed, he should come to be able to repent of what his conscience did not tell him was wrong.

In that memorable debate along the low grounds above indicated, here and there appears a sentence worthy of a great man on a great occasion. As a specimen take the following words of Bishop Soule. Using the liberty then allowed to bishops of speaking as a member of the house, he proceeded as follows:

"I can not, and I need not, conceal from you, sir, or from this General Conference, that since the commencement of this session I have been the subject of deep mental distress and agony. But, in this respect, the season of my bitterness has passed away. . . . I am, I assure you, willing, entirely willing, so far as I am myself concerned, to be immolated; but I can be immolated only on one altar, and that altar is the UNION of the Methodist Episcopal Church. You can not—all the powers of earth can not—immolate me upon a northern altar or a southern altar."

Dr. Lovick Pierce, of Georgia, replying to the arguments on "expediency," said:

"Of all notions that were ever defended before a body of Christian ministers, the notion of asking an act of this sort (*i. e.*, the resignation of Bishop Andrew) on the ground of 'expediency,' when it is as inexpedient for one portion of a united body of Christians to do this as it is expedient for the other that it should be done, is to me the most fearful mockery of sound logic. Do that which is inexpedient for us, because for you it is expedient? Never while the heavens are above the earth let that be recorded on the

journals of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church! Do you ask us how this matter is to be met? It is to be met by the conservative principles and the compromise laws of this book of Discipline. Show your people that Bishop Andrew has violated any one of the established rules and regulations of this Church, and you put yourselves in the right and us in the wrong."

Such a challenge from such a source was not to be put aside. Something besides "expediency" must be considered. The power of a two-thirds northern majority was not, after all, the final court of appeal. It began to dawn upon the minds of some of the brethren from that section of the Church that such a method of dealing with a Methodist bishop would not make a creditable page in Methodist history. Accordingly, a substitute was moved by two members from Ohio, James B. Finley and Joseph M. Trimble, as follows:

"WHEREAS, The Discipline of our Church forbids the doing anything calculated to destroy our itinerant general superintendency; and

"WHEREAS, Bishop Andrew has become connected with slavery by marriage and otherwise, and this act has drawn after it circumstances which, in the estimation of this General Conference, will greatly embarrass the exercise of his office as an itinerant general superintendent, if not in some places absolutely prevent it; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains."

This was a more decent and not less "expedient" proposal, for it evaded, as did the Griffith-Davis resolution, the only disciplinary method of procedure. It was on this resolution that Dr. Hamline made his famous speech which is understood to have won for him a bishop's chair. It was a legally logical speech, entering into the distinction between constitutional and statutory law, to which latter class the section on the responsibility of bishops to the General Conference belonged. He affirmed that this section had no place as constitutional law; it had never been recognized and had no history as such, and the General Conference in ten minutes might expunge it from the Discipline, and put a different section in its place. Under it Bishop Andrew had no vested rights. He was, as a bishop, made by the General Conference, as was the case with all other

general officers of the Church; and the power to retire him, or expel him if need be, even if there were no such section in the Discipline at all, resided with the General Conference. He contended that the Conference held all powers which were not, by historic position or constitutional enactment, denied to it. The retiring or expelling a bishop was not one of the things which the General Conference was forbidden to do. There was no "restrictive rule" against it; therefore the charge brought by the Southern delegates that it was a crime against the Discipline to attempt to suspend or remove Bishop Andrew without due and formal trial was unfounded. The General Conference was not bound or limited by any mere statutory provisions of the Discipline; for the Discipline itself was, like the bishops, a creature of the General Conference.

The argument of Dr. Hamline was thought to be unanswerable. Moreover, it was just the doctrine which the majority of the body, who were bent on passing the Finley-Trimble resolution, needed to justify their proposed action. It was also shown that if the bishops were not subordinate to the General Conference like the other officers which it elected, but constituted a co-ordinate section of the governing power of the Church, there was a possibility of the Episcopacy coming to be strong enough to defy the Conference; a state of things which would mean havoc and ruin in the body. In reply to the great speech of Dr. Hamline, Drs. Smith and Winans struck at the substance of it as utterly subversive of the rights of the minority, and as nullifying one of the co-ordinate branches of the Church government. A General Conference acting in a judicial or other capacity is bound to proceed by its own laws and to observe its own statutes until properly altered; as much so as an inferior judicatory. Whoever claims protection according to those statutory laws is constitutionally entitled to it; otherwise a majority doing its own will is an unbearable tyranny. The case under consideration, they maintained, was specifically covered and protected by laws and statutes which had stood since 1816, and had been reiterated; and had so kept the peace between the two sections of the Church that the sacredness of a "compromise" attached to them." (McTyeire's History of Methodism, p. 631.)

The voices of Hamline and Peck and Griffith and Bangs, of Winans and Early and Longstreet and Smith, are silent; but their echoes have been often heard in the Governing Conference, fighting over again this great contention of 1844. The strenuous efforts so lately made to find or make a larger "constitution" for the Church belong to this section of its history. In 1896 the long preparing labor culminated. But though episcopal sympathy and assistance greatly sustained the "Committee on Constitution," its carefully-adjusted scheme for enlarging the territory in which the General Conference should itself be under restraint, failed; and at the closing hour the precious document, with all its wise provisions and all its shrewd amendments, was, with scant courtesy, laid on the table. Not readily does the Methodist General Conference part with power.

The bishops in 1844, as they saw the day approaching, determined to make one more effort to save their colleague and to save the Church. On the 30th of May, when nearing a vote, the Conference was requested by Bishop Hedding "to hold no afternoon session, and thus allow the bishops to consult together, with a hope that they might be able to present a plan of adjusting our present difficulties." "The suggestion was received with general and great cordiality, and on motion the discussion of the [Finley-Trimble] substitute was postponed until to-morrow morning." (Minutes of General Conference of 1844, p. 74.

On the morning of the 31st of May Bishop Waugh, on behalf of the Episcopal Board, presented an address in which it was proposed to refer the case of Bishop Andrew to the General Conference of 1848; he being meanwhile employed in those localities in which his labors would be acceptable. This plan was so well received that there was hope of its adoption. All the southern delegates favored it, and so did many of the more conservative members from the north. Its consideration was fixed for the following day, but when the time arrived, Bishop Hedding withdrew his name from the address. He said he had signed it because he thought it would be a peace measure, but facts had come to his knowledge since which led him to believe that such would not be the case. (Ibid, p. 81.) This

act of Bishop Hedding appears to have defeated the measure, for in spite of it, a motion to lay it on the table only prevailed by a vote of 95 to 84.

It now became an interesting question what those "facts" were which led the bishop to withdraw his name from the address. They were not published until twenty-five years later. It then transpired that the Council of the Bishops suggested by Bishop Hedding had alarmed the delegates from the conferences in New England. Whereupon they at once "called a meeting and signed a paper, declaring in substance that it was their solemn conviction that if Bishop Andrew should be left by the General Conference in the exercise of episcopal functions, it would break up most of the New England conferences, and that the only way to be holden together would be to secede in a body, and invite Bishop Hedding to preside over them." (*Methodist Quarterly Review,* April, 1871; as quoted in McTyeire's History of Methodism, p. 636.)

The vote on the Finley-Trimble resolution was then presently reached, which resulted in its adoption by 111 yeas to 69 nays.

But even this overwhelming majority vote could not be accepted as equivalent to the final dissolution of the Church. On the 3d of June H. Slicer and T. B. Sargent, both of the Baltimore Conference, presented resolutions, affirming, first, that the vote in the case of Bishop Andrew be considered as advisory only, and not in the light of a judicial mandate; second, that the final disposition of his case be referred to the General Conference of 1848, as suggested in the Bishops' Address of the 31st of May. (Ibid, p. 85.) These resolutions were laid on the table "for the present," but they never appeared again.

Then followed the series of resolutions prepared by Dr. Capers, of South Carolina, proposing: First, a territorial division of the Church into two General Conferences, the division following the line separating the slave states from the free states. Second, each of these bodies to have the same powers as the present General Conference, with certain enumerated exceptions. Third, these two bodies to be designated as the Southern

General Conference and the Northern General Conference. Fourth, three-fourths of all the annual conferences having voted in favor of this plan, the southern annual conferences were to hold a delegated General Conference in the city of Nashville on the first day of May, 1848. Fifth, the Book Concern to be held and conducted for the benefit of all the annual conferences as heretofore; the editors and agents to be electetd at a joint session of the two bodies. Sixth, the same arrangement to be made with respect to the foreign missions of the dual Church. These resolutions shared the same fate as those above mentioned.

Next came that document over which more contention has been heard since the great disruption than over any other action of that momentous session; viz., the declaration presented on the 5th of June by A. B. Longstreet, of the Georgia Conference, on behalf of the delegations from the southern and southwestern conferences. The point in dispute was, and still is, whether or not this declaration constituted an act of "secession" by the conferences therein represented. It was read, as follows:

> "The delegates of the conferences of the slaveholding states take leave to *declare* to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church that the continued agitation on the subject of slavery and abolition in a portion of the Church, and the frequent action on that subject by the General Conference, and especially the extra-judicial proceedings against Bishop Andrew, which resulted, on Saturday last, in the virtual suspension of him from his office as superintendent, must produce a state of things in the south which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over these conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding states."

This was signed by fifty-one southern delegates, the entire list, excepting one from Texas. The communication was referred to a committee of nine, Rev. Messrs. Paine, Fillmore, Akers, Bangs, Crowder, Sargent, Winans, Hamline, and Porter. (Minutes of General Conference, 1844, p. 109.)

As this was not in the form of a "resolution," it evidently was not entitled, perhaps not intended, to call for an official response by the Conference; nevertheless, the body treated it as a proper subject for action; and, on motion of J. B. McFerrin,

of Tennessee, seconded by Tobias Spencer, of the Troy Conference, it was

"*Resolved*, That this committee be instructed, provided they can not in their judgment devise a plan for an amicable adjustment of the difficulties now existing in the Church on the subject of slavery, to devise, if possible, a constitutional plan for a mutual and friendly division of the Church."

On the 6th of June, two days before the report of the committee of nine, the bishops requested an answer from the Conference to the following questions:

"1. Shall Bishop Andrew's name remain as it now stands in the Minutes, Hymn-book, and Discipline, or shall it be struck off of those official records?

"2. How shall the bishop obtain his support? As provided for in the form of Discipline, or in some other way?

"3. What work, if any, may the bishop perform? and how shall he be appointed to the work?"

In reply to these inquiries of the bishops, John T. Mitchell, of the Rock River Conference, offered the following resolutions:

"*Resolved*, 1. As the sense of this Conference, that Bishop Andrew's name stand in the Minutes, Hymn-book, and Discipline as formerly.

"*Resolved*, 2. That the rule in relation to the support of a bishop and his family applies to Bishop Andrew.

"*Resolved*, 3. That whether in any, and, if any, in what work Bishop Andrew be employed, is to be determined by his own decision and action in relation to the previous action of this Conference in his case."

It is surprising, but withal, highly creditable to the dominant anti-slavery section of the house, that all these resolutions were cordially adopted: The first by a vote of 155 yeas to 17 nays; the second by 152 yeas to 14 nays; the third by 103 yeas to 67 nays. From this it is evident that the north did not regard any of its actions as absolutely closing the case.

On the 7th of June "John Early, on behalf of the southern delegations, asked that A. B. Longstreet be added to the committee of nine. On motion the Conference refused to grant the request." (Minutes of General Conference of 1844, p. 122.) This most ungracious action, following the cordial agreement to the resolutions on behalf of Bishop Andrew on the previous

day, is difficult to account for. It must have produced profound displeasure on the part of the south.

Meanwhile, the southern delegations laid before the Conference a protest against its action in the case of Bishop Andrew. It bore the names of fifty-nine delegates, most, but not all, of whom were from conferences in slaveholding states, and claimed to represent the views of about five thousand ministers and fifty thousand members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This protest first asserted that the action of the Conference in Bishop Andrew's case "was without law, and contrary to law." Second, it denied the right of a General Conference to proceed against a bishop, except upon charges of guilt and under due process of law. Third, it claimed that the action against Bishop Andrew tended to the establishment of a dangerous precedent, which would place any bishop in jeopardy to the will and caprice of any General Conference. The protest further set forth the fact that the ground of action by the Conference against Bishop Andrew was not valid: slaveholding *per se* not being an offense against the Methodist Discipline. It had existed in the Church from the first under certain provisions and limitations, against none of which Biship Andrew had transgressed. The claim of the majority that because bishops are constituted by the General Conference, they may also be removed by them at pleasure, was also sharply denied.

It is matter of interest in this connection, that this last mentioned point in the protest was afterwards conceded by the northern section of the divided Church. In the General Conference of 1872 the power of expelling a bishop on their own judgment was surrendered, and the section containing that provision was made to stand, as it now remains, viz.: "A bishop is answerable for his conduct to the General Conference, who shall have power to order the manner of his trial." (Sherman's History of the Discipline, p. 208, ¶ 8.)

A committee was appointed to consider and reply to the protest of the southern brethren; but all it could do was to restate the doctrine of Dr. Hamline's great speech. However, two new facts were brought to light: First, it was stated that the deed of trust by which Bishop Andrew had conveyed to

his wife his interest in the slaves owned by her at the time of their marriage, provided that the said slaves should be held in trust "for the joint use of himself and his wife; and of whom the survivor is to be the sole owner." Second, it was made to appear that Bishop Andrew, in view of the difficulties of his situation, did at one time contemplate resigning his office as bishop, but that his southern brethren, learning of his half-formed purpose, led him to abandon it. (Minutes of General Conference of 1844, Appendix, p. 201.)

On the 8th of June the committee of nine made its report as follows:

"The select committee of nine to consider and report on the declaration of the delegates from the conferences of the slaveholding states, beg leave to submit the following report:

"WHEREAS, A declaration has been presented to this General Conference, with the signatures of *fifty-one* delegates of the body, from thirteen annual conferences in the slaveholding states, representing that, for various reasons enumerated, the objects and purposes of the Christian ministry and Church organization can not be successfully accomplished by them under the jurisdiction of this General Conference as now constituted; and

"WHEREAS, In the event of a separation, a contingency to which the declaration asks attention as not improbable, we esteem it the duty of this General Conference to meet the emergency with Christian kindness and the strictest equity; therefore,

"*Resolved*, By the delegates of the several annual conferences in General Conference assembled,

"1. That, should the annual conferences in the slaveholding states find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection, the following rule shall be observed with regard to the northern boundary of such Connection:—"All the societies, stations, and conferences adhering to the Church in the south, by a vote of a majority of the members of said societies, stations, and conferences, shall remain under the unmolested pastoral care of the Southern Church; and the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church shall in no wise attempt to organize Churches or societies within the limits of the Church South, nor shall they attempt to exercise any pastoral oversight therein; it being understood that the ministry of the south reciprocally observe the same rule in relation to stations, societies, and conferences adhering, by vote of a majority, to the Methodist Episcopal Church; provided also, that this rule shall apply only to societies, stations, and conferences bordering on the line of division, and not to interior charges, which shall in all cases be left to the care of that Church within whose territory they are situated.

"2. That ministers, local and traveling, of every grade and office in the Methodist Episcopal Church, may, as they prefer, remain in that Church, or, without blame, attach themselves to the Church South.

"3. *Resolved,* By the delegates of all the annual conferences in General Conference assembled, That we recommend to all the annual conferences, at their first approaching sessions, to authorize a change in the Sixth Restrictive Article, so that the first clause shall read thus: 'They shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern, nor of the Chartered Fund, to any other purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children, and to such other purposes as may be determined upon by the votes of two-thirds of the members of the General Conference.'

"4. That whenever the annual conferences, by a vote of three-fourths of all their members voting on the third resolution, shall have concurred in the recommendation to alter the Sixth Restrictive Article, the Agents at New York and Cincinnati shall, and they are hereby authorized and directed to deliver over to any authorized agent or appointee of the Church South, should one be organized, all notes and book accounts against the ministers, Church members, or citizens within its boundaries, with authority to collect the same for the sole use of the Southern Church, and that said Agents also convey to the aforesaid agent or appointee of the south all the real estate, and assign to him all the property, including presses, stock, and all right and interest connected with the printing establishments at Charleston, Richmond, and Nashville, which now belong to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"5. That when the annual conferences shall have approved the aforesaid change in the Sixth Restrictive Article, there shall be transferred to the above agent of the Southern Church so much of the capital and produce of the Methodist Book Concern as will, with the notes, book accounts, presses, etc., mentioned in the last resolution, bear the same proportion to the whole property of said Concern that the traveling preachers in the Southern Church shall bear to all the traveling ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the division to be made on the basis of the number of traveling preachers in the forthcoming Minutes.

"6. That the above transfer shall be in the form of annual payments of $25,000 per annum, and specifically in stock of the Book Concern, and in southern notes and accounts due the establishment, and accruing after the first transfer mentioned above; and until the payments are made, the Southern Church shall share in all the net profits of the Book Concern, in the proportion that the amount due them, or in arrears, bears to all the property of the Concern.

"7. That Nathan Bangs, George Peck, and James B. Finley be, and they are hereby, appointed commissioners to act in concert with

the same number of commissioners appointed by the southern organization (should one be formed), to estimate the amount which will fall due to the south by the preceding rule, and to have full powers to carry into effect the whole arrangements proposed with regard to the division of property, should the separation take place. And if by any means a vacancy occurs in this board of commissioners, the Book Committee at New York shall fill said vacancy.

"8. That whenever any agents of the Southern Church are clothed with legal authority or corporate power to act in the premises, the Agents at New York are hereby authorized and directed to act in concert with said southern agents, so as to give the provisions of these resolutions a legally binding force.

"9. That all the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church in meeting-houses, parsonages, colleges, schools, conference funds, cemeteries, and of every kind within the limits of the southern organization, shall be for ever free from any claim set up on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, so far as this resolution can be of force in the premises.

"10. That the Church so formed in the south shall have a common right to use all the copyrights in possession of the Book Concerns at New York and Cincinnati at the time of the settlement by the commissioners.

"11. That the Book Agents at New York be directed to make such compensation to the conferences south, for their dividend from the Chartered Fund, as the commissioners above provided for shall agree upon.

"12. That the bishops be respectfully requested to lay that part of this report requiring the action of the annual conferences before them as soon as possible, beginning with the New York Conference."

To this momentous list of propositions the south as well as the north agreed. During the time of their presentation and the final action thereon the southern delegations made no reply; but their voting upon them, as well as their taking part in the elections of bishops, in the interest of their own candidate, Edmund S. Janes, proves that they did not consider either their "declaration" or their "protest" as an act of secession from the Church.

All the propositions, as above reported, were peacefully adopted, some of them by overwhelming majorities of the entire house, on yea and nay votes. For example: The first item was adopted by a vote of 147 yeas to 22 nays; the second by a vote of 135 yeas to 18 nays; the third by 147 yeas to 12 nays. The fifth, on which the yeas and nays were next called for, by a

vote of 153 yeas to 13 nays, etc. The nays did not include a single prominent southern name.

The only remaining point of interest in this memorable, epoch-making Council of the Church is the adoption of the final report of the Committee on Slavery. It proposed that the action of the General Conference of 1840 relative to receiving testimony of colored persons in trials of white members of the Church be rescinded; but declared that it was inexpedient to take further action concerning the subject of slavery. Thus, with nearly a two-thirds majority of the body on their side, the abolitionists allowed the Discipline to stand as aforetime, according to which the mere holding of slaves was no offense against the law of the Church in states where the laws did not admit of emancipation.

The chapter on slavery remained untouched until the General Conference of 1864. Then, with the awful echoes of a colossal civil war resounding in their ears, that body adopted and sent down to the annual conferences a proposition to change the General Rules of the Church, so as to make "slaveholding," as well as "buying and selling slaves" a bar to Church membership. But before the official action of the annual conferences could be officially reported to the Great Council of 1868, God and Abraham Lincoln and the Government of the United States had stamped out slavery from the nation.

CHAPTER V.

FRATERNAL RELATIONS.

THE appearance of a fraternal delegation from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Baltimore in the year 1876 is a part of the greatest miracle ever recorded in ecclesiastical history since the Christian era began. It affords a proof not only of the supernatural possibilities of saving grace, but also gives a sweet suggestion of that depth of love and unity in the hearts of all true Methodists which floods and fires can not drown or bury. In order to a full appreciation of this great event, a brief review of the history of those memorable years between 1844 and 1876 must here be given.

Immediately on the adjournment of the General Conference of 1844 the southern delegates held an informal meeting and, without waiting for the action of the annual conferences on the Plan of Separation, they determined to call a convention of their ministers at Louisville, Ky., on the first of May, 1845. During the year which followed the vast majority of the southern ministers and members gave in their adhesion to the Plan of Separation, and prepared to become members of a Southern Methodist body; but some in the border conferences refused.

The Louisville convention, acting upon what they deemed their undoubted right under the action of the General Conference of 1844, solemnly renounced all allegiance to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and enacted that the annual conferences represented at that convention "are hereby constituted a separate ecclesiastical connection, based on the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and comprehending the doctrines and entire moral, ecclesiastical, and economical rules and regulations of said Discipline; except only in so far as verbal alterations may be neces-

sary to a distinct organization: and to be known by the style and title of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." (Dr. Myers on the Disruption: as quoted by McTyeire, pp. 642, 643.)

Pursuant to the action of this organizing convention, their first General Conference met at Petersburg, Va., on the first of May, 1846. The body numbered 87 members. John Early presided until the arrival of Bishop Andrew. Bishop Soule, who had determined to cast in his lot with the south, soon after appeared and both these bishops, without any further form of election, were invited to take up the exercise of episcopal functions in the new organization. A few days later Dr. William Capers and Dr. Robert Paine were added to the episcopal force of the new Church, and as the entire Discipline and doctrines of the original body had been adopted, it was assumed that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was a divided part of that body, and under the Plan of Separation entitled to their *pro rata* share of the denominational property.

As a pledge of their good faith, this first General Conference of their Church elected a fraternal delegate, the Rev. Lovick Pierce, D. D., to convey their fraternal salutations to the next ensuing session of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The failure of that mission was an event deeply to be deplored, and the history thereof is not at all creditable to the body which turned this messenger away.

Meanwhile some of the northern conferences had failed to ratify the Plan of Separation, and the claim began to be set up, that, on this account, the Southern Church was not entitled to any share in the property of the Book Concern. They had been pushed to a position from which retreat was impossible, and yet it was alleged that they were "seceders," because northern conferences had denied them the right to go in peace. The south had done all that was possible on its part to carry out the Plan of Separation, as mutually agreed upon in the General Conference of 1844, and then to be called "seceders" was more than flesh and blood could bear. Commissioners on both sides were appointed for the adjustment of difficulties, but those of the north refused to act, and referred the south to the General Conference of 1848.

That assembly has been well characterized as "a reactionary

body elected in a revolutionary period." Very few of the members in 1844 reappeared. The temper of the Conference was averse to a Southern Methodism; nearly all its members having been elected on a pledge to repudiate the Plan of Separation. Early in the session, Dr. Lovick Pierce, the fraternal delegate from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, presented himself and his credentials, to which, two days later, the Conference made this reply:

"WHEREAS, A letter from the Rev. L. Pierce, D. D., delegate of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, proposing fraternal relations between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has been presented to this Conference; and

"WHEREAS, There are serious questions and difficulties existing between the two bodies; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That while we tender to the Rev. Dr. Pierce all personal courtesies, and invite him to attend our sessions, this General Conference does not consider it proper at present to enter into fraternal relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." (Minutes of General Conference 1848, p. 21.)

The Conference did, however, express its willingness to hear communications from Dr. Pierce relative to questions at issue between the two bodies. The above resolutions were, after the amendment just recited, adopted by a vote of 147. No one voted nay. Dr. Pierce made a dignified response to this ungracious procedure, saying:

"You will regard this communication as final on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. She will never renew the offer of fraternal relations between the two great bodies of Wesleyan Methodists in the United States. But the proposition can be renewed at any time, either now or hereafter, by the Methodist Episcopal Church. And if ever made upon the basis of the Plan of Separation, as adopted by the General Conference of 1844, the Church South will cordially entertain the proposition."

On the 12th of May the commissioners from the Church South, who had been referred to the General Conference of 1848 for the settlement of the claims of the Southern Church upon the property of the Book Concern, made their appearance. The result was that on May 24th an almost unanimous vote was passed, declaring that "there exists no power in the Methodist Episcopal Church to pass any act which, either

directly or indirectly, effectuates, authorizes or sanctions a division of said Church." (Journal of General Conference of 1848, p. 43 and p. 73.) This repudiation of the Plan of Separation barred the Conference, as it was intended to do, from any consideration of the property claims of the Southern Church.

The southern brethren could not fail to be impressed by this change of attitude as to the powers of the General Conference. In 1844, Dr. Hamline had carried the great majority of the body enthusiastically with him while he showed that the Conference possessed plenary powers, and was entitled to take whatever action it pleased, except in so far as such action might be prohibited by the Restrictive Rules. There was no Restrictive Rule which forbade the Conference to expel or suspend a bishop without form of trial; therefore the Conference had the power and right to expel or suspend Bishop Andrew. But now the opposite theory was maintained. It was somehow discovered that the General Conference possessed no powers, except such as were specifically given to it by the Discipline; therefore the Conference of 1844 had no authority to enact a Plan of Separation, and that of 1848 had no power to divide any Church property; no such powers having been set down in the Discipline. This latter doctrine was as convenient for the majority in 1848 as was the opposite doctrine for the majority in 1844.

Failing thus to obtain what they believed to be their rights, the Church South "appealed to Cæsar" And "Cæsar" vindicated them.

If there is anything that will provoke eternal enmity between brethren, it is a suit at law over an inheritance. For years this famous case dragged its slow length along through one court after another until, on the final appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States, it was decided in favor of the Church South, and under its judgment the Book Concern was compelled to give over to them the publishing-houses at Richmond, Charleston, and Nashville, all accounts due from the south, and two hundred and seventy thousand dollars in money; the northern parties to the litigation being also obliged to pay the cost of suit.

All this while the troubles in the border conferences had

been raging, resulting in conference disruptions and all the quarrels thence resulting over local Church property.

Then the war! Four long years of wholesale slaughter! Northern Methodists, by tens of thousands, invaded the south, and southern Methodists killed them. Back and forth surged the tides of death and ruin until, over all the great Southland, the grass grew rank on battle-fields soaked with fraternal blood, and gashed with nameless graves in which northern and southern Methodists, who had been foremost in the fight, at last slept peacefully side by side.

Nor was this enough. When the war was nominally over, some of the ministers and people of the Church South found their sanctuaries held by military law, and occupied by northern preachers under appointment of northern bishops. And this property they were in no haste to surrender.

But worst of all, the hated abolitionists had at last gained their long expected victory. Slavery was dead, Negroes once worth a thousand dollars each, now roamed in idle bands, and voted at elections where white men had no rights, because they had not been "reconstructed." For a time the era of the final judgment was on them. The first were now last, and the last first. Southern Methodist homes were sacked, and their plantations mortgaged and rented out to Negroes, who once had been slaves thereon. Methodist churches and colleges had been wrecked or burned; each side prayed to Heaven against the other; the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, failed to hold its appointed session in 1862, and the annual conferences breathed a feeble life, because so many of their ministers had laid down the Bible and hymn-book, and taken up the musket and the sword. Talk of "fraternity" between two such bodies of men with such mountains of wrath and such seas of blood between them!

And yet it is a fact! With men it was impossible, but with God all things are possible.

In the crash and carnage of battle men forgot all about Churches and conferences; but when the fight was over, great numbers of "fraternal relations" were established between the men in blue and the men in gray. Take a case.

"See here, Yank, give me a drink of water. I 'll not trouble

you long." It is the voice of a mortally wounded rebel, speaking to his enemy, who is helping the medical staff. He at once forgets all about politics, gives the dying man a drink, puts him in an easier position, takes his name and the address of his family, and then asks:

"Is there any thing else I can do for you?"

"Not unless you know how to pray," is the reply.

"O yes, I learned that at a Methodist camp-meeting down in Maine."

"And I was converted at a Methodist camp in the everglades of Florida," says the dying man; enemy no longer, but a Christian brother now. And in the arms of his once mortal foe he leaves the world of war, and starts for the world of peace.

The north and the south never really came to know each other until they made acquaintance in the Civil War. And what was true as to the two sections of the nation, was still more true of the two sections of the Methodist Church.

There is a mystery too deep for our poor philosophy in the spirit of comradeship which binds together the hearts of brave men, who have proved each other's courage on the battle-field. Does it seem a strange thing to say that even the war itself helped to make fraternity possible in Church as well as state? Well, every good soldier of Christ, both in northern and southern armies, will not fail to understand it.

The General Conference of 1868, at the suggestion of the bishops, appointed a committee "to treat with any other Methodist Church that may desire a union with us." On this authority, Bishops Janes and Simpson met the southern bishops at the city of St. Louis on the 7th of May, 1869; but though they were courteously received, they were informed that the action of the Northern General Conference did not at all apply to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. She had no desire for any such "union." They also took exception to the statement in the letter of Bishops Janes and Simpson, that "the great cause which led to the separation from us of both the Wesleyan Methodists of this country and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has passed away." To this they replied: "Slavery was not, in any proper sense, the cause, but the oc-

casion of that separation, the necessity of which we regretted as much as you. What you call the cause of separation existed in the Church from its organization, and yet for sixty years there was no separation." They reminded their visitors that the General Conference at Pittsburg had rejected their overture of fraternity, which had been made by the first General Conference of the Church South, and they protested against that sentence in the overture of the northern bishops, which spoke of the Southern Church as having separated from the original body. "Allow us," say they, "in all kindness, brethren, to remind you, and to keep the important fact of history prominent, that we separated from you in no sense in which you did not separate from us." (Formal Fraternity, p. 11.)

The document further cites the aggressions of the Northern Church upon southern territory, and the occupation of some of the Southern Churches. This they characterize as "an invasion of the plainest rights of property." After speaking such plain words the response of the southern bishops grows more fraternal. The blood that is thicker than water begins to warm towards their co-Methodist brothers; and the document concludes with such kind words as leave the impression that, while the Southern Church desires no reunion with the north, they leave the door wide open for good faith and fellowship with it.

At the Southern General Conference of 1870 at Memphis, Tenn., and also at that of 1874 at Louisville, Ky., fraternal representatives appeared from the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but it was not till the session of that body at Baltimore in 1876 that the Southern Church, after the rejection of her first overture of fellowship, consented to present herself once more by a fraternal delegation.

That was a memorable day in the General Conference of 1876, when, on the 12th of May, by their representatives, the north and south came together once more. It was on old historic Methodist ground. The senior member of the Church South delegation, was the now venerable and aged Dr. Lovick Pierce, the very same man who, in a similar capacity nearly thirty years before, had presented himself at the door of the

General Conference at Pittsburg, and had been coolly turned away. The second member of the delegation was the Rev. James A. Duncan, president of Randolph Macon College in Virginia; scholarly, self-poised, a man to be looked at a second time, and never to be forgotten. The third was that distinguished southern layman, Landon C. Garland, LL. D., chancellor of the Vanderbilt University at Nashville, one of the finest Methodist institutions of learning at that time in the world.

On this day the Conference reached its climax. The vast assembly in the great Baltimore Music Hall seemed impressed with more than human interest as they entered upon the exercises of that heavenly hour. It was matter of deep regret that the beloved Dr. Pierce could not be present in person as well as by word. He had started for the Conference, but had broken down under the infirmities of more than ninety years. Yet his heart was there, and his words were there, though given by another voice. In his written address he recalled the "protest" of his southern brethren at the General Conference of 1844, which was the actual beginning of the great disruption. Then, sweeping in thought over the marvelous changes which time and the providence of God had brought about, he wrote:

"We (now) protest against any longer use of the popular phrase, 'two Methodisms,' as between us. There is but one Episcopal Methodism in the United States of America, and you and we together make up this one Methodism."

In reference to the differences and difficulties, so many of which remained to be adjusted, he said:

"We do not believe that these difficulties ever ought to be discussed in either General Conference at large. They are delicate, sensitive things, never to be settled by chafing speeches; but, as we believe, they can be speedily PRAYED AND TALKED TO DEATH by a joint board of discreet brethren intent upon Christian peace."

The Rev. Dr. Duncan was next introduced. Was there in his wonderful address something of the Spirit of heaven, to which he was so soon to ascend? He said:

"Charity is a provision, not for unity, but for diversity. . . . Heaven send us rest from these miserable, unhappy controversies! . . . I am aware, Mr. President, that some persons will not cease from that kind of warfare in which they have so much

pleasure. But, sir, harmony with such people is simply impossible; the only harmony they ever know is of some unhappy tune which they alone can sing. . . . Our proposal is: Let us appoint wise men to adjust all questions of real conflict between these two Churches; let us pray the God of all wisdom and peace to direct them to right conclusions, and then bury forever the weapons of war, and move on to the better, brighter conquests of peace."

"And now, sir, what is Christian fraternity? And on what ground do we establish it? I answer: Christian fraternity is the reciprocal recognition of Christ in each other. Where no such relations to Christ exist, there can be no fraternity. There is but one principle of communion in Christianity. St. John has stated it clearly and beautifully: 'Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Ah! brethren, in that eternity to which we are all rapidly advancing, when earthly enmities and all the fiery passions that consume human peace shall have sunk into ashes, and petty strifes of time shall seem but miserable follies of which we are ashamed, how many men will wish their bitter words had been unsaid!" ("Formal Fraternity," pages 43-55.)

This godly man had not very long to wait for his share in those heavenly harmonies, for which his prophetic spirit listened on that memorable day. He was presently made a bishop, and served a brief season in the chief council af the Southern Church, and then, even in what might have been thought the midst of his strength and at the beginning of a great career, he was admitted to the rest and the peace of those who walk with Christ in white.

Dr. Garland closed this historic day with wise and fraternal words. And thus the miracle was wrought. The impossible had become a fact. Fraternity had been established. Peace had come.

The Southern General Conference, in anticipation of the events of that day of days, had named a commission under the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That in order to remove all obstacles to formal fraternity between the two Churches, our College of Bishops is authorized to appoint a commission consisting of three ministers and two laymen, to meet a similar commission authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to adjust all existing difficulties." ("Formal Fraternity," page 40.)

That commission consisted of E. H. Myers, D. D., one of the chief historians of the Southern Church; R. K. Hargrove, D. D., Thomas M. Finney, D. D., Hon. Trusten Polk, and Hon. David Clopton. With delicate courtesy towards their southern brethren, the General Conference at Baltimore adopted an identical resolution to that quoted above, and raised a commission consisting of Morris D'C. Crawford, D. D., Erasmus Q. Fuller, D. D., Hon. Enoch L. Fancher, LL. D., General Clinton B. Fisk, and John P. Newman, D. D.

This united representative body, known in history as "The Cape May Commission," assembled in Congress Hall, Cape May, New Jersey, on Thursday, the 17th of August, 1876, and proceeded to "talk and pray to death" the last remainders of the "difficulties," which for so many years had kept the two great Methodist bodies apart.

But the southern commissioners stood by their colors to the last, and announced at the outset that they were not empowered to act in the promises, except on the basis of the "Plan of Separation." To this the northern commissioners gave gracious assent; and in order, once for all, to settle that long controversy, the following

DECLARATION AND BASIS OF FRATERNITY BETWEEN THE TWO CHURCHES

was unanimously adopted:

"Each of said Churches is a legitimate branch of Episcopal Methodism, having a common origin in the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in 1784.

"Since the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was consummated in 1845 by the voluntary exercise of the right of the southern annual conferences, ministers and members, to adhere to that Communion, it has been an evangelical Church, reared on Scriptural foundations; and her ministers and members, with those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have constituted one Methodist family, though in distinct ecclesiastical connections."

This history does not concern itself further with the business of the Cape May Commission, except to say that the great expectations in reference to its momentous mission of peace were fully realized. From that day to this, at every session of the General Conferences of Northern and

Southern Methodism, fraternal delegations, fraternal in spirit as well as in name, have borne testimony to the truth that God hath made of one spiritual blood all the good and true Methodists for to dwell on all the face of the earth.

And now in due historic order, after the above departure therefrom, the bonds of Christian brotherhood which have bound the Methodist Episcopal Church, through its Chief Council, to so many other bodies of evangelical believers will have consideration.

Some writers have fallen into the error of claiming as Methodists that body of Arminian Christians established in America by the Rev. Philip William Otterbein, at Baltimore, in 1774; hence a brief notice of the true state of the case may be of value here. Otterbein, who had been a minister in the Reformed Church in Germany, came out to America in about 1752, but finding the American Lutherans no more spiritual than those in the home land, he started out to worship God for himself. He first established a Church in the city of Baltimore in the year 1774, which became the nucleus of a considerable communion under the name of United Brethren in Christ; of which Otterbein and Martin Boehm were the first two bishops. Between these and the Methodists, under the lead of Asbury, there was the most delightful fraternity, but never an organic union. Their Arminian theology, their episcopal form of government, and their truly spiritual experience brought them close together. Otterbein and Asbury were as David and Jonathan; and all the chapels of the United Brethren were gladly opened for the itinerants whenever any of them appeared. These two famous pioneers preached together in many notable revivals, and when, at the General Conference of 1784, Asbury was "set apart" as a general superintendent of the Methodists in America, his old friend Otterbein assisted at the service.

In the early days no formal fraternity was to be expected with the various Christian Churches, whose coming to the New World had long preceded that of the Methodists. With the exception of Otterbein and Boehm, and of the pious Devereux Jarratt, whose Churchmanship did not stand in the way of his real religion, the clergy of other bodies showed

scant courtesy, to say nothing of fraternity, towards the Methodist preachers, whom they regarded as intruders and poachers upon their denominational preserves. Besides, with the above-named exception, all the Churches were Calvinistic, and were therefore out of harmony with these irregular, untutored wanderers, who were profusely throwing about the offers of "free salvation," as if there were no such things as "election" and "decrees" in the way of penitent sinners.

The first foreign relations of American Methodism were not fraternal, but paternal. Mr. Wesley, as the spiritual father of them all, was accustomed to send them his commands and his benedictions; both of which were, for a time, most filially received. It was at the General Conference of 1796, five years after the death of Mr. Wesley, that the British Wesleyan Conference, which had themselves failed to follow out all the arrangements made for their benefit by their great departed chief, sent a fraternal address to their brethren across the sea. It is to be noted that the address was sent "by means of our highly-respected brother, Dr. Coke"—not "Bishop Coke"—for the British Wesleyans had repudiated the Episcopacy prepared for them by their founder in the persons of Mather and Coke, both of whom he had ordained as general superintendents, one for America and the other for Great Britain. This manifest discourtesy was not adverted to in the reply of the American Conference, unless it be in the reference to "your and our late father in the gospel, the Rev. John Wesley." Concerning him the document proceeds to says: "We do trust, brethren, we shall, with you, persevere to walk by the same rules, and mind the same things"—a "trust" which has failed to be realized far more in Britain than in America.

For some years after the beginning of the next century, a state of "strained relations" existed between the British Wesleyan Conference and the American General Conference on account of the extension of the American Church into Canada. Perhaps, at the close of the War of the Revolution, it was, politically speaking, the duty of the citizens of the new nation to abstain from encroaching, even in an ecclesiastical way, upon the territory whose people still were loyal to the

British Crown. But this they had not done. In consequence whereof two Canadian Methodisms had come into existence—one American, and of American origin; the other British, the result of British Wesleyan missionary labor. For a considerable period Canadian delegates, not "fraternal," but for business purposes, were present at the sessions of the General Conference, representing an interest similar to that of the claim of the Church South for its rightful share of the property of the Book Concern.

After the war of 1812 a serious contention arose in Upper Canada, which resulted in an "Enabling Act" by the General Conference of 1828, providing for the organization, under specified conditions, of an independent Canadian Methodist Episcopal Church. This body was duly organized before the close of the year under the presidency of Bishop Hedding. From the various and long-continued troubles over the northern border a chronic difficulty had developed, which, at successive General Conferences, came to be known as "the Canada business." On this account a coolness appeared between all parties concerned; and as late as the session of 1832 a letter was received by one of the American bishops, stating that it was "not convenient" for the British Conference to send delegates to the American General Conference at that time. (Journal of General Conference, 1832, p. 392, ¶ 14.)

But "the Canada business" was finished by degrees. One step was an agreement between the General Conference and the Canada Wesleyan Conferences that neither party should send preachers into the territory of the other without mutual consent. Another was the allowance of the (American) Canadian's claim for a share in the property of the Book Concern. Thus, while hot contention sometimes appeared between the several sorts of Methodists which set up for themselves across the northern border, the relations of them all with the General Conference came at length to be truly fraternal. In the records of those days stand the names of two of the princes of the Canadian Israel: the Rev. William Case, the Asbury of the north, and the Hon. Egerton Ryerson, that staunch defender of the rights of Nonconformists in the Colonies against the pretensions of the clergy of the Church of England.

But the brightest page in Canadian Methodist history is suggested by the appearance at the General Conference of 1888 of a fraternal delegation from "the Methodist Church of Canada." Here was another miracle; viz., the union of the four rival, contentious, straitened bodies of Canadian Methodists into a compact and harmonious Church. On the occasion of his reception by the Conference, the Rev. E. A. Stafford, pastor of the Metropolitan Church in Toronto, presented his credentials, signed by "A. Carman and John L. Williams, General Superintendents." At the outset of the movement for union it was evident that an episcopal form of government could not be adopted, whereupon Bishop Carman, renouncing his episcopal honors, threw himself into the enterprise with all his heart; and thus gave it a possible hope of success.

At the General Conference of 1840, in view of the rapid increase of the German population, among whom Henry Boehm, Adam Miller, and William Nast had been laboring with such remarkable success, it was determined to send a fraternal delegation to attend the ensuing session of the General Conference of the Evangelical Association at Summit, Ohio, in 1843. John F. Wright, William Nast, and Nathaniel Callender were appointed on that mission. This body, Methodist in doctrine and episcopal in Church government, seemed near enough to the Methodist Episcopal Church to suggest the possibility of a closer co-operation, perhaps a corporate union. It dated from the year 1800, when, under the episcopate of Jacob Albright, it was organized into a Church, with the above-mentioned name.

The delegation was cordially received; but the German membership of the Methodists was at that time so small, and that of the Albrights (as they were commonly called) so large, that only a fraternal relation could be established between them.

The General Conference of 1856, at Indianapolis, had the privilege of joining hands with the Irish Wesleyan Conference through their representative, the Rev. Robinson Scott, and also, in an informal way, with a branch of Methodism which had been planted in Switzerland, and which held a feeble life among the French Alps and in the fertile valleys of Piedmont.

French Methodism was, like that in America, an importation from Britain, its first appearance having been in 1791 in the person of a pious boatman from one of the Channel islands. This man had come over to the coast of Normandy on a small trading venture, and, in the absence of the usual reader in the Church of the village where he was spending the Sabbath, he was invited to conduct the simple service. This he was forward to do. But instead of reading, he plunged into a genuine Methodist program; a large portion whereof consisted in telling his experience. From that time, said the visiting brother (whose name, by some strange oversight of the editors, nowhere appears in the Minutes of that session), the good work then begun was often interrupted by the wars of the Republic and the Empire, and "it was not till the arrival of the English missionary, the Rev. Charles Cook, in France, in 1818, that the mission was finally and fully established."

One of the two most distinguished representatives ever sent to the General Conference from any foreign land was the Rev. William Morley Punshon, who appeared as the fraternal delegate of the British Conference at the session of 1868 in Chicago. No more cordial and joyful reception could have been desired by a visiting brother than that accorded to this great-hearted, eloquent, genial British Methodist. Dr. Punshon was broad enough and free enough to have made a good and great American, if Providence had so ordained. The keynote of his splendid address to the Conference was in these words:

"We feel no jealousy that you have outstripped ourselves. The Lord God of our fathers make you a thousand-fold more than you are, and bless you as he hath promised!"

In his reference to the recent jubilee of the British Wesleyan Missionary Society, Dr. Punshon brought out the following interesting historic incident, which is worthy of record in our own missionary annals:

"I regard it as no inconsiderable satisfaction to be able to remind you to-day that, when Richard Boardman and Joseph Pillmoor in 1769 were sent out to America, the first missionary collection was made in the British Wesleyan Conference. The ministers there assembled were the only persons who contributed, and the sum of upwards of two hundred dollars was put into their hands."

Dr. Punshon preached before the Conference on the 15th of May, and that body paid him the rare compliment of publishing in their Minutes a full report of his masterly sermon.

Another notable presence at the General Conference of 1868 was that of the Hon. Egerton Ryerson, delegate from the Wesleyan Church of Canada. A Church which could produce two such men as Punshon and Ryerson in one generation must have better than royal blood in it.

Two new candidates for fraternal fellowship appeared at this session; viz., the Wesleyan Conference of Eastern British America and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

But perhaps the most startling document of a fraternal character which then, or ever, was presented to the body, was a letter from some clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church, suggesting the appointment by the Conference of a commission to meet a similar commission to be appointed by the Episcopal General Convention, with a view to consider and forward some plan for the union of those two communions. The document was signed by ten ministers of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey, but had no other authority. It was out of the real fraternity of their hearts and on account of the bond of union existing between the two bodies in the person and work of John Wesley, that these brethren made this informal overture. The Conference appointed a committee to correspond with the authors of the letter, but it has not transpired that any further steps in the direction suggested have ever been taken by either of the two bodies concerned. A few thousand more such large-minded clergymen in the Protestant Episcopal Church as the signers of that notable letter might make their visionary suggestion a visible and glorious fact.

The first of the chief and long-established Churches in America which reached out a fraternal hand (for which, of course, the courtesies of the situation required the newest of all the great communions to wait) was the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. This distinguished body, at its session in Chicago in 1871, had delegated the Rev. Howard Crosby, D. D., and the Rev. Joseph T. Duryea, D. D., to represent it before the Methodist General Conference of

1872. In his address, Dr. Crosby referred to the recent union of the two sections of the Northern Presbyterians, each still having its own theological seminary, in which to shape the opinions of its young ministers according to "Old School" or "New School" dogmas. He then proceeded to say:

"Brethren, what caused that union? Has the Old School laid aside any of its special views of truth? Has the New School buried its particular ideas in the bottom of the sea? Has Princeton given up its own views of theology, or has Union [The Union Theological Seminary, New York] surrendered anything peculiar to it? Not at all. . . . Princeton remains Princeton still, and Union is Union still. Why, then, this united body? I answer: Because we have come to recognize the truth that as long as human bodies differ, so long will various minds differ in the apprehension of truth; and at the Cross of Christ we can all agree."

Thus spake "Union." Four years later the Presbyterian General Assembly was represented by "Princeton" in the person of that notable heresy-hunter, the Rev. Francis L. Patton, D. D., who was at that time president of a Presbyterian School of the Prophets in Chicago, and later coming to be the embodiment of "Princeton" itself. In his brief address at Baltimore, every word of which showed the scholar and the theologian, he affirmed that Methodist and Presbyterian theology were "capable of being reduced to two opposite propositions;" and prophesied that so they would remain. Yet he rejoiced that the two bodies had so much in common that true Christian fraternity could well be expected to continue between them. "Arminianism," said he, "is the Arminianism of Wesley, and Calvinism is the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession. . . . The realm of (theological) thought falls into two hemispheres, and Calvinists and Arminians divide between them the whole bulk of Christian thinking men."

That was twenty years ago. Now the Calvinism of Calvin is never heard, nor yet that of the Westminster Confession, in its full strength, outside of a few professional "Princetons;" but the Arminianism of Wesley has captured both hemispheres of Christian thought, and is preached in every principal orthodox pulpit on the globe.

And why is this?

Largely because, as Joseph Cook once said, "The Methodists have a theology that can be preached." Thus does General Conference fraternity plant milestones along the road over which the Churches climb the centuries. Of all the various classes of opinion the fittest only survive. Henceforth no serious error can ever live to grow old.

At the session of 1872, to which this record now returns, three more members of the Methodist family were fraternally represented; viz., the "Methodist" Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. There was also a Baptist delegation, representing the Baptist Home Missionary Society. And last, but not of smallest interest, the native Chinese Mission Churches in Foochow sent a filial letter to the Conference, saying that the document stood for 68 preachers, 1,009 members, 653 probationers, and 260 baptized children, belonging to the Chinese Methodist Missions on the other side of the world.

Following the appearance of that belated Calvinist, the Rev. Professor Patton, D. D., in the fraternal receptions of 1876, came a good man in a bad position—the Rev. Dr. Cummins, bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church. A reformation in the body from which this new sect was a recent offshoot might have been desirable; but the avowed purpose of winning over to its ranks great numbers of Methodists who were supposed to be in love with the Church of England liturgy did not argue hopefully for much real reformation at its hands. On that occasion Bishop Cummins claimed John Wesley as "the first great Reformed Episcopalian—our great prototype." . . . "His principles," said the bishop, "are our principles, his policy is our policy, his spirit is our spirit; and we ask no higher honor than that this new Church should tread in the steps of Wesley." (Journal of General Conference of 1876, Appendix, p. 525.) After a very full showing of the almost exact parallelism of the "little sister" with the Methodist Episcopal Church—so exact, indeed, as to raise the question why that little company of reformers had not become Methodists outright—the persuasive bishop gave the Church of Wesley his most affectionate benediction. But

it was never heard that the hope of large accessions to the new enterprise from the old-time Methodist communion was realized.

Another addition to the rapidly-growing list of fraternities during the session of 1876 was a letter from the National Council of the Congregational Churches (not "Church," as in the published Journal) in the United States. With the charming grace of diction, of which he was an acknowledged master, their great controversialist and most doughty defender, Dr. Leonard Bacon, of New Haven, addressed the body, on paper, writing, among other pleasant things: "There have been worse interpretations of Scripture than to say that 'the elect lady' is the General Conference, 'and her children are the Churches which the Conference governs.'"

"That small but very respectable body," as the late distinguished President Seeley once styled it, was also personally represented by the cultured and brotherly Dr. Rankin, pastor of the Congregational Church in Washington, D. C. In his admirable address he brought out two facts which belong to the roots of Methodist history, as follows: "Bishop Haven tells me that his father was superintendent of a Congregational Sunday-school; and your venerable Bishop Ames has informed me that his grandfather was a Congregational clergyman in New England. So I say, if we are small in numbers, it is partly because we have contributed so much of the best of our substance for your good." Of the continual increase in the membership of Congregational Churches from persons converted in Methodist revivals the graceful orator did not speak. But one more utterance of his is too significant of a great trend of thought in Christendom to be omitted here. It was this: "I thank the Methodist Church for preaching Arminianism, though I am a Calvinist—that is, with regard to the past. With regard to the future, I am an Arminian."

How good are those fraternal gatherings, in which great Christians, like Bacon and Rankin, may venture, without challenge by their sect, to speak from their heart of hearts!

At the above-named session another branch of the family came to pay its respects, viz., the Colored Methodist Episcopal

Church—a body in the Middle South, having four bishops and a General Conference.

It was at this time also that the memorable action was taken with regard to holding an Ecumenical Methodist Conference. The prime mover in this important project was the late Rev. Augustus C. George, D. D., of the Central New York Conference. The body approved the suggestion, and a Committee of Correspondence, with the view of forwarding the proposal, was raised and ordered to report in 1880. (Journal of General Conference of 1876, pp. 367, 368.)

Agreeably to the above direction the Committee of Correspondence reported to the General Conference of 1880 in the city of Cincinnati, for substance, that the purpose and plan of holding an Ecumenical Methodist Conference had been presented by Rev. E. O. Haven, D. D., to the British Wesleyan Conference at its session in Bradford, England, July 31, 1878. The mother Conference gave most hearty response to the suggestion of her eldest daughter; and from all around the world the younger members of the great household responded with delight. The Conference, therefore, since the design had been universally approved, called a meeting of a joint committee from the several American Methodisms, which was held in the city of Cincinnati, May 10, 1880. This committee formally recommended the holding of the proposed Ecumenical Conference in the City Road Chapel, London, in the middle of August, 1881; and in accordance thereto the General Assembly of representatives of a world-wide Methodism was duly held at the place above mentioned, September 7-20, 1881.

The great event at the General Conference of 1880 was the appearance of the Rev. William Arthur, M. A., as delegate from the British Wesleyan Conference. With a single exception, his was at that time the greatest name in British Methodism. He was fresh from his vivid experiences in Italy during its revolution from tyranny to liberty; and his reception, for personal as well as official reasons, was something to warm his heart to his dying day.

At that time also spoke the Rev. Dr. Atticus G. Haygood, later a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the

man who had the courage and the Christly love to write, "Our Brother in Black,"—two good men, cast in great molds, who have left the Church richer by their name and fame.

In the large fraternity section of the Journal of the General Conference of 1884, held in Philadelphia, appears the report of its distinguished representatives at the Ecumenical Conference, which met in the City Road Chapel, London—John Wesley's old church—on the 7th of September, 1881. The Journal of this historic assembly makes a large volume. Nor does it claim attention here. But readers of these pages will be pleased to know that in at least three of the chief departments of effort the Methodists of America bore off the palm. Bishop Simpson was the matchless preacher; Bishop Peck showed himself the prince of chairmen; and the Rev. Dr. Price, one of the colored preachers from the South, was the prime favorite as an extemporaneous orator.

The second Ecumenical Methodist Conference was held at the Metropolitan Church, Washington, D. C., on the 7th of October, 1891. Two only of the great utterances of that memorable occasion can even be mentioned here. The first was the opening sermon of the Rev. William Arthur, read by his friend, the Rev. T. B. Stephenson, D. D., LL. D. The second, in which the period of flood-tide was reached, was the oration of Bishop Fowler on the present status of Methodism in the Western Section. The scene at the close of this sublime address was beyond all description. The whole audience sprang to their feet, and shouted and cheered and laughed and wept together. Then the tumult died away; but a second time it rose, cheer on cheer, till it seemed like the shouting of a great army at the moment of victory. Then a second time there was silence. But a third time the applause broke forth, as if the vast assembly could not contain itself under the surging tides of emotion aroused by the mighty thoughts and the matchless sentences of Methodism's great orator, always hitherto unequaled save by one, who was then above.

At the session of 1892, in Omaha, Neb., no new candidates for fraternal honors appeared.

A suggestive fact in current Methodist history was the

appearance, at the General Conference of 1896, held in Cleveland, Ohio, of a delegate from New Zealand, the Rev. J. J. Lewis, who was on his way to perform a similar office at the approaching session of the British Wesleyan Conference.

By this time fraternity is a fact so vast as to be almost oppressive. Hence the method, now fast coming into use, of messages by telegraph conveying the brotherly salutations of one great body of true believers to another. We say true believers; for it is to be noticed that of all the many bodies represented at this great quadrennial Council, no loose or "liberal" or doubtful sect has ever reached out a fraternal hand. Methodism has no fellowship with men who think themselves good enough without regeneration, wise enough to sit in judgment upon Divine revelation, and great enough not to bow down before the Son of God.

CHAPTER VI.

LAY DELEGATION: MEN—WOMEN.

FOR more than fifty years the exclusively clerical administration of all spiritual affairs in the Church was accepted without serious question. It was assumed as a matter of course that, so far as official government was concerned, the Church was the ministry, and the ministry was the Church. But with the appearance of a generation of native-born American Methodists this instinctive sentiment, which the original members of the societies brought over the sea with them, began to change; and there was a call for more of the membership and less of the ministry in the direction of Church affairs.

It was a blessing to the great body of the Church that those who wished to conform its polity to that of the new nation gathered together and set up a communion for themselves—the Methodist Protestant Church, in 1828, and the Wesleyan Methodist Connection in 1843, both of them with only a single order, that of elder, in their ministry. The name of this last-mentioned secession was not historically appropriate. As every one knows, Wesley was an opposer of the slave-trade; but, as the members of this divisive company seem to have forgotten, he was as far as possible from being an advocate of republicanism of any kind. With the disappearance of slavery, all that was "Wesleyan" in their system, as distinguished from that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, disappeared. As in the name of Wesleyan abolitionism they went out, so in the name of Wesleyan episcopacy they might return.

The first mention of "Lay Delegation" in the annals of the General Conference is found in the Journal of the session of 1824. The body refused the measure, and, as the subject was at that time agitating the Church, an argument against it was ordered to be prepared for official publication. At the next meeting of the Great Council the subject reappeared, and met with a similar response. The reply to the memorialists in its favor was, in this instance, made by Dr. John Emory, after-

wards one of the bishops, author of the standard work, entitled, "Defense of Our Fathers."

In the midst of the anti-slavery excitement at the General Conference of 1840 time was found for another discussion of the Lay Delegation question, as was also the case in 1852, on both of which occasions the clerical lawmakers refused to share their prerogatives with the laity, as being the demand of only a few malcontents.

In the month of March, prior to the session of 1852, a very respectable convention of Methodists had been held in Philadelphia, at which a memorial to the approaching Conference was prepared, praying for the establishment of lay delegation, both in the annual and General Conferences of the Church. On the 5th of May following another convention of Methodist laymen was held in the same city, deprecating the measures asked for by the previous assembly. Memorials both for and against the proposed change, but mostly against it, were poured in upon the Conference. In due time the committee to whom the papers had been referred, reported that the great majority of the Church were either indifferent or opposed to lay delegation; and the substance of their report was incorporated into the Pastoral Address.

During the next few years the leaders of the movement gathered to themselves several prominent ministers; but from first to last it was noticeable that their following embraced, proportionally, a larger number of clergymen than of laymen. The rank and file of the Church, in whose interest the reform was pushed, did not have any interest in it.

At its opening session, the General Conference of 1860, held in the city of Buffalo, on motion of J. M. Reid, added to the usual list of standing committees a Committee on Lay Delegation. By this it was evident that the measure had been gaining strength. On the 30th of May, William H. Goode, chairman of this committee, moved that the order of the day be suspended, to receive the report on lay delegation. Daniel Curry moved to strike out the words "to receive the report of the Committee on Lay Delegation," and insert the words, "to take up the report on slavery." This proposed amendment was laid on the table by what may be regarded as a test vote of 93 to 61.

The chief significance of this incident was the appearance of the sturdiest opponent of the proposed reform, whose name frequently occurs in the whole history of the movement. At the Conference of 1864 Daniel Curry was elected the successor of Edward Thomson as editor of the *Christian Advocate* at New York. From that strong position he fought the coming revolution step by step. He was successful at first, having a considerable following of both orders in the Church. But, as in the case of King Canute, the rising tide came to be too strong for him.

Shortly after the adjournment of the Conference of 1860 a newspaper, called *The Methodist*, was established in the city of New York, for the promotion of the coming reform. Its editor was the scholarly George R. Crooks, D. D., with Abel Stevens as corresponding editor. Among its special correspondents were Dr. John McClintock, then in Paris, and Dr. John P. Newman, later one of the bishops, who was making a tour in Bible lands. The setting up of an opposition organ under the shadow of "the great official" could not fail to make a sharp division in both the ministry and laity of the central section of the Church, though the paper never attained a very large or wide circulation.

After a quadrennium of debate, some of which might be called dispute, it was to be expected that the General Conference of 1864, which assembled in the city of Philadelphia, would be a breezy one. The result of the vote on lay delegation, both in the annual conferences and in the Churches, had been a great disappointment to the reformers. It was officially reported by the bishops as follows:

Ministerial vote, in favor of lay delegation, 1,338; opposed, 3,069.

Vote of male members of the Church over twenty-one years of age, in favor of lay delegation, 28,884; against, 47,855.

Early in May of that year an important convention of laymen had been held in the city of Philadelphia, which did not adjourn until after the opening of the Conference. From this convention a delegation of laymen, bearing an address to the Conference, appeared in that body on the 19th of May. The names of this distinguished delegation were as follows: Ex-

Governor Wright, of Indiana; Governor Cannon, of Delaware; Dr. James Strong, C. C. North, Esq., John Elliott, Esq., of New York; Cornelius Walsh, Esq., of New Jersey; Hon. Thomas Kneil, of Massachusetts; George C. Cook, Esq., of Chicago; and Oliver Hoyt, Esq., of Stamford, Conn. The address of the convention, presented by this delegation, after a courteous salutation to the Conference, proceeds to charge to the account of the General Conference of 1860, and to the clergy in their own pulpits, the unsatisfactory size of the above lay vote, as compared with the very large membership of the Church. A few extracts will show its substance and tone.

"1. A popular vote upon any question of connectional interest is without precedent in American Methodism. The facilities for *adequately* employing this method of ascertaining the popular judgment do not as yet exist. Whether the vote should be properly taken depended solely upon the fidelity and care of the pastors. In our opinion, the preachers should have been required to notify the people by reading the resolutions of the General Conference, and the passage in the Pastoral Address which touches upon lay delegation from their pulpits, and not by verbal statement; and the General Conference papers should have been directed to publish the same resolutions conspicuously a certain number of times during the period appointed for the taking of the vote.

"2. In point of fact, the vote was very imperfectly, and, in some cases, irregularly taken. In some instances preachers neglected, or wholly refused, to present the subject to their congregations. In other cases that have come to our knowledge the people were requested to give their judgment upon the admission of laymen to the annual conferences as well as to the General Conference, thus having before them a question totally different from that which was, by your order, presented to their consideration. We have evidence of circuits where, by the ruling of the presiding elder, but one time and place were permitted for the voting of all the Churches therein. We take these to be but samples, and we have a painful impression that in hundreds of the Churches the people were very imperfectly advised of the duty laid upon them by the General Conference. No other result could, therefore, be expected than a comparatively small vote, which can not be said fully to reflect the opinion of our laity."

Near the close of the address the following passage occurs:

"We are gratified to find, fathers and brethren, that in urging our claim we are occupying the ground of the greatest teachers of Methodism. The prince of Methodist theologians, Richard Watson,

whose 'Institutes' you have made a ministerial text-book, distinctly asserts that 'Those regulations which are subsidiary to the great end of the Church's commission *are intended, in Christ's plan, to rest upon the mutual concurrence of the ministry and the people.*"

The address, which shows throughout a high courtesy and a clear judgment as to connectional affairs, was signed by Thomas Kneil, President, and James Strong, Secretary. Its date is May 18, 1864.

On the 27th of May the Committee on Lay Delegation made their very brief report. The following were the resolutions contained in it:

"*Resolved*, That while we reaffirm our approval of lay representation in the General Conference, *whenever it shall be ascertained that the Church desires it*, we see no such declaration of the popular will as to justify us in taking advanced action in relation to it.

"*Resolved*, That we are at all times ready to receive petitions and memorials from our people on this subject, and to consider them most respectfully."

The General Conference of 1868 met in the city of Chicago. Lay delegation was again the principal topic. The standing committee thereon had now reached the number of fifty-five, that being the then present number of annual conferences. Among the names in this list familiar to readers of Methodist history are those of John Lanahan, E. O. Haven, C. Munger, S. M. Merrill, B. I. Ives, Daniel Wise, T. M. Eddy, A. J. Kynett, and Reuben Nelson. Of this influential committee, E. O. Haven, afterwards bishop, was chairman.

On May 14th a Laymen's Convention was held in Chicago, at which a memorial to the General Conference was prepared, bearing the names of a committee of thirty-eight leading Methodist professional and business men from all over the Church. Of this committee General Clinton B. Fisk was chairman, and among the signers of the memorial appear the names of Governor John Evans, of Colorado; Isaac Rich, William Claflin, and Franklin Rand, of Boston; Oliver Hoyt, of Stamford, Conn.; A. P. Stout and Lemuel Bangs, of New York; Harvey De Camp, of Cincinnati; Amos Shinkle, of Covington; F. H. Root, of Buffalo; Joseph Hillman, of Troy; and John T. McLean, of San Francisco.

The central point of their argument may be found in the following brief quotation:

"You, fathers and brethren, as a General Conference, are wielding powers of the greatest magnitude—powers which virtually affect our welfare. Our church property has now reached a valuation of thirty-five millions of dollars, and our property in parsonages is estimated at five millions of dollars. By an enactment now standing in the Discipline, no church or parsonage can be sold without the permission of the ministers in annual conference assembled. This General Conference is the perpetual patron of all the pulpits of the Methodist Episcopal Church. You dispose absolutely of all donations, bequests, and grants made for benevolent purposes to the Church, your trustees merely holding such property subject to your order. This General Conference is therefore sole legatee and grantee in all such cases. You can also exercise discretion as to the length of the pastoral term. . . . You require of us a pledge to support the ministry, by which is, of course, meant the pastors duly appointed. In all this the laity is merely passive. Does it not appear to you that a General Conference making such requirements of, and laying such commands upon the laity, should be composed in part of lay delegates? The exercise of such large power is, no doubt, necessary; but it would come more appropriately from a General Conference in which the ministry and laity are jointly represented. . . . The continuance of the exercise of such great powers by the ministry alone must, in time, give to a General Conference of ministers the appearance of lordly authority. A General Conference in which ministry and laity are both represented can, with the best reason, lay its commands upon both." (*Daily Christian Advocate*, 1868, page 61.)

With such arguments and such men to project and maintain them, lay delegation was a foregone conclusion. There was in the Wesleyan Connection of Great Britain, when a similar contention was before the "Legal Hundred," a bold declaration, on the part of some determined lay reformers, that if the rights of those who almost wholly maintained the ministry were any longer ignored, a proclamation of "no supplies" would be made. It does not appear that the argument reached this violent stage in American Methodism.

With the exception of the *Christian Advocate* at New York, the press of the Church indorsed the claims of the laymen, so that there was no occasion for such mutinous threats as that of the British Wesleyans above recited. "It must come," was the prediction of the best minds in the Church; and at this

distance of time it is difficult to understand how such reasonable claims of the laity could ever have been seriously disputed.

As at Philadelphia, so also at Chicago there were two parties of laymen in active opposition; the one inside and the other outside of the Conference. A small gathering of local brethren sent in a counter memorial to that above mentioned, deprecating the proposed changes in what it called "the settled and heaven-appointed polity of our cherished Methodism," affirming that the Church was, with few exceptions, satisfied with its present "Let well enough alone." (See *Daily Christian Advocate,* 1868, page 77.)

In the reports of the Committee on Lay Delegation the names of two future bishops appear. The majority report, which was an effort at compromise and accommodation, was presented by the chairman, Erastus O. Haven; the minority report was a straight-out attack upon the assumed power and right of the General Conference to change the Constitution of the Church in the way proposed. It was presented and defended in a masterly speech by S. M. Merrill, whose standing as a Methodist constitutional lawyer was gained in that debate.

The leader of a minority of ten against a majority of forty-five in the committee laid down the proposition that a constitutional body did not possess the power to change its own form of existence, except as was provided in the Constitution thereof. Any such change must be made by the anterior and superior power by which that Constitution was originally established. Such power, in the case then in question, was the membership of the annual conferences. It was this body, *en masse,* which at the last actual General Conference in the year 1808 had constituted the delegated General Conference as it has since existed. To this anterior tribunal, then, must all proposed changes in the composition of the delegated General Conference be referred, and from this source all power and authority to change the Constitution of that delegated General Conference must come.

The majority report of the Committee on Lay Delegation made no provision for submitting the proposed change to the annual conferences; therefore, it was challenged by the minority

report. This minority report went still farther, and cited the small vote on lay delegation, which question had been sent down to the annual conferences, and out to the adult male membership at the Conference of 1864, as a reason against the proposed reform. It concluded in the following words:

"'*Resolved*, That the feeble array of petitioners presented to this General Conference asking for lay delegation, viewed in connection with our more than a million of members, and the extraordinary and long-continued efforts to obtain their signatures, furnishes incontestable evidence that our people are generally averse to the change proposed, and therefore we deem it inexpedient for this General Conference to adopt any definite plan for its introduction."

Dr .Merrill did not claim to be opposed to lay delegation in itself; but his attitude was one of hostility, not only to the proposed manner of changing the Constitution of the General Conference, but also to the proposed change itself. His great speech was, however, of no small service to the cause of the coming reform, for it swung the majority over to his way of thinking, so far as to lead to the submission of both reports to a special committee, with the view to find some common ground of action. This final committee proposed to submit the constitutional question to the annual conferences again, and the proposed plan to the adult male membership of the Church. The word "male" was subsequently stricken out, and thus the whole subject in both its constituent parts was submitted to the anterior and ultimate authority in a way to which no objection could possibly be taken. This form of the question, together with a plan for its introduction, was accepted by the Conference of 1868, and referred for final approbation to the Conference of 1872. The vote on this measure stood as follows: 227 in favor, to 3 against lay delegation.

When at the General Conference of 1872 the success of the measure was officially announced, it again appeared that the conferences, both annual and General, were far in advance of the masses of the Church, as, indeed, they ought to be. The result was given as follows: Ministerial vote—for lay delegation, 4,915; against lay delegation, 1,597. Thus by the ministry the change was carried, with only 31 votes to spare.

Exact figures in the vote of the laity were not obtainable; but in round numbers it appeared that out of a total of 150,000 ballots, 100,000 were for lay delegation.

The principle of lay delegation having been adopted by the requisite three-fourths vote of the ministry, and the proposed plan having been approved by a majority of the laity voting on the subject, 129 lay delegates appeared at the opening of the General Conference of 1872 at Brooklyn. Their election, under the authority of the action already taken in the case, was almost unanimously ratified by the clerical body, whereupon they were admitted to seats in the Great Council. The occasion was auspicious. The Church had sent up its best men. Many were prominent in legal and business circles, and some had national reputations for enterprise and liberality. Many of them were masters in parliamentary proceedings, and were thus able to add to the steadiness as well as to the propulsive power of the assembly.

Among the exciting topics which came before the body was what has been known as the Book Concern trouble. This was wholly a business affair; a small affair as it proved to be on due business-like examination, though a great deal of confusion in the Church papers, and no little sensationalism in the secular press had been made out of it. In this many of the laymen were of eminent service. They helped to sift the case to the very bottom. Their committee reported that no crimes had been committed, and no considerable losses had been suffered. In order to utilize their lay re-enforcement to the fullest extent, a layman was elected associate Book Agent at New York. John M. Phillips, chief manager for many years of the Western Methodist Book Concern at Cincinnati, was the man honored with this promotion. The choice was an ideal one, and under his wise and genial administration the great Methodist publishing-house was restored to its former place in the confidence of the Church, and entered upon a still higher career of success.

In the details of the plan of lay delegation, it was provided that the ministers and laymen should sit and vote as one body; but to compensate for the fact of their constant minority, it was provided that either order might claim the right to vote separately whenever such separate vote should be demanded by

one-third of either order. In such cases the concurrent majority of both orders should be necessary to complete an action. (Journal 1872, page 46.)

When the plan of lay delegation was in its formative stage, it had been proposed to deny the right of a separate vote by orders in the case of elections; but no such restriction existed in its final form. Accordingly, no General Conference officer could be elected, to whom a majority of either order might object. Again, the right to call for a vote by orders gave to the laymen a veto power over the action of a possible majority of the whole body.

In view of these facts, as well as on account of the reluctance of the lay delegates to exercise their powerful privilege, propositions of equal clerical and lay delegations were sent down to the annual conferences of 1892 and 1896. But, since the only possible equalization would be in reducing the number of ministerial delegates, the plan met with little favor. In view of the rapid increase in the number of the Great Council, already almost unmanageable at times, the suggestion of that eminent Methodist statesman, Bishop Ames, for a separate house of lay delegates recurs. In 1892 at Omaha, and in 1896 at Cleveland, the laymen had a section of the hall marked off for those who wished to sit in a body by themselves. In 1896, also, on open evenings of the Conference, a series of informal gatherings of laymen was held, which had a simple plan for its own organization, and in which the General Conference Rules of Order were enforced. Of these facts it may be said, "Coming events cast their shadows before."

LAY DELEGATION: WOMEN.

An adequate history of the progress of a great movement, whose final determination has not yet been reached, is impossible. Nevertheless, certain steps have been taken for fixing the status of women in Methodist Church government, which are of no little interest and importance, some of which throw further light upon the uses which may be made of that vague and undefined something, called "The Constitution of the General Conference."

It does not appear that the original claim of women to a share in the legislative functions of the Church ever had any definite history. Its genesis was too vague for record. Bishop Asbury makes mention of the fact that in certain sections he could find more women than men who were competent to fill the office of class-leader; but he says nothing about admitting his women class-leaders into any of his conferences, either quarterly or annual.

The first official notice taken of women by the General Conference was, by implication, in the session of 1868. When the motion was pending to refer the question of lay delegation to the annual conferences, and the plan therefor to the adult male membership of the Church, David Sherman, of the New England delegation, moved to strike out the word "male." Such a motion by such a grave and conservative Doctor of Divinity took the House by surprise. If it had come from an advanced radical like Gilbert Haven, it would have seemed natural enough. A ripple of merriment ran over the assembly, which increased to general laughter, when the irrepressible Peter Cartwright threw in a quotation from the hymn-book. In the hilarious scene which followed, the journal of the day shows that the gravity of at least one of the bishops was quite upset, to say nothing of the effect of the scene upon men of humbler degree. Under these circumstances the motion was carried with the utmost readiness, and thus for the first time Methodist women voted along with men on a great constitutional question.

At the memorable Conference of 1872 the following definition was ordered to be inserted in the Discipline:

"Who are laymen?

"The General Conference holds that in all matters connected with the election of lay delegates the word 'laymen' must be understood to include all members of the Church who are not members of the annual conferences." (Journal 1872, page 442.)

In the session of 1880 the following definition was placed in the Discipline:

"The pronouns 'he,' 'his,' and 'him,' when used in the Discipline with reference to stewards, class-leaders, and Sunday-school superintendents, shall not be so construed as to exclude women from such offices." (Journal 1880, page 339.)

At the same session the question arose as to the licensing of women as local preachers and as to the ordination of women to the ministry. There were women in the Church who were evidently called of God to preach the gospel, and who were exercising their gifts with notable success. Chief among these was that eminent evangelist, Mrs. Maggie (Margaret) Van Cott, who had already been licensed to preach, and there were others who were seeking the same Churchly recognition. On this account it was decided that women might not be licensed as local preachers nor ordained to the office of the ministry. It was made an offense for a presiding elder to permit the former in a quarterly conference, and the bishops were authorized to refuse to put a motion in an annual conference in favor of the latter. Thus the General Conference of 1880 proved its willingness to share with the women in the humbler labors of the Church, but refused them any share in its ministerial powers and honors. (See Journal 1880, page 353.)

This action was not well received by many of the most prominent and useful female members of the Church, one of whom offered the suggestion that, if God called women to preach, and men refused to ordain them, they could call a conference of godly women, who should ordain the candidates themselves. In this way it was held that the Old Testament order of prophetesses would be repeated in the New Testament Church.

The next official appearance of this vexed question was at the General Conference of 1888, held in the city of New York. On this occasion four women presented themselves, with due credentials, as members; viz., Frances E. Willard, from the Rock River; Angie (Angeline) F. Newman, from the Nebraska; Mary C. Nind, from the Minnesota; and Amanda C. Rippey, from the Kansas Conference. Lizzie (Elizabeth) D. Van Kirk had also been elected from the Pittsburg Conference; but did not claim her seat. Seventeen other women were elected as first or second reserves.

Immediately after the devotional exercises with which the Conference opened, an event occurred which has become historic as an illustration of the use which can be made of

that much-abused "Constitution of the General Conference" under stress of great emergency.

The Discipline contained special directions as to the manner in which the credentials of lay delegates should be prepared, and the women as well as the men elected had been duly certified to the secretary of the preceding session, whose business, by established precedent, it would be to call the roll of delegates-elect for the due and proper organization of the House. Before this roll was called, when as yet there was no General Conference in existence, Bishop Bowman, the senior bishop, proceeded to read an episcopal manifesto, declaring for substance, that, by constitutional authority vested in the bishops in the intervals of General Conferences, the Board of Bishops had directed that the names of certain delegates be omitted from the roll. One reason given for this action was that letters had been received by the bishops, signed both by ministers and laymen, threatening to challenge the names of certain persons if they should be read from the roll. Another reason assigned was that there was no law or precedent for the admission of women as members of the General Conference. Another was that, in the nature of the case, there must first be a body of unchallenged delegates, by which the cases of those who were challenged should be determined. (See *Daily Christian Advocate,* 1888, p. 9.)

The Bishops' "Constitutional" Address did not give either the names of the persons against which, in private correspondence only, objections had been made, nor did it give the names of the would-be challengers. A real challenge was, of course, impossible until the name should be read in calling the roll of the Conference about to be organized. And yet, on the mere threat of a challenge, which challenge did not, and could not, at that time exist, the bishops presumed to do by an assumption of constitutional authority what they could not do either by justice or by law. The well-established principle, that a legislative body is the judge of the qualifications of its own members, was evaded by bringing forward the document before the Conference had any legal existence. No motion could be made, no point of order taken, no stay of proceeding effected, no protest offered. Thus, by episcopal

fiat, in the very presence of all the elements of a General Conference, the commencement of whose existence was, by this act, just so much delayed, the initial rights of those women, on the basis of their regular credentials, were ignored; the secretary obeyed the command of the bishops, and the House was organized without including the names of the duly-elected women. Thus, from a weak position in the lobby, instead of from a strong position in the House, the battle of the women's side of lay delegation was fought and lost. So the women must wait.

And yet the episcopal manifesto announced that it was the purpose of the bishops to see that "the subject be presented to the General Conference for action, without prejudice to the rights of any party in the case!"

In due time the subject of the eligibility of women was referred to a committee, which reported adversely; and the report, on a vote by orders, was adopted.

The following are the figures in the case:

Ministerial vote—In favor of report excluding women, 159; against the report excluding women, 122.

Lay vote—For the report excluding women, 78; against the report excluding women, 76.

As there was so small a majority against the admission of women, the friends of the measure secured a re-reference of the question to the annual conferences, and to the entire adult membership of the Church, with the following result:

Ministerial vote—For admission of women to Lay Electoral and General Conferences, 5,609; against admission of women, 5,144.

Lay vote—For admission of women, 235,668; against admission of women, 163,843.

At the General Conference of 1892 no women appeared as delegates, though two had been elected as alternates. The adverse report of the voting was not, however, accepted as the final settlement of the question. On the last day of the session, the Judiciary Committee, containing some of the most determined opponents of women delegations, was asked to give an official definition of the words "laymen" and "lay delegates" as they occur in paragraphs 55 to 62 of the Disci-

pline. A short time before the final adjournment, the committee reported, concerning these words, "that they do not apply to both sexes, but apply to men only." (Journal of General Conference, 1892, p. 358.)

This was claimed to be a strictly legal and "constitutional" definition, though reference was made to the discussions thereon which had taken place in recent Conference sessions.

This new "legal" definition of the words, whose meaning, as fixed by the General Conference, had stood in the Discipline for years, was too evidently partisan to escape being challenged. Members were already preparing to depart; but such an utterance could not be left to work its mischief in the Church for the next quadrennium without dispute. Accordingly, D. H. Moore moved, as a substitute for the report, that the word "laymen," when used in connection with the election of "lay delegates," must, according to the very words of the Discipline, "be held to include both men and women."

At this point, J. W. Hamilton moved an amendment to the substitute of Dr. Moore, the essential feature whereof was the following resolution:

> "*Resolved*, That we submit to the annual conferences the proposition to amend the Second Restrictive Rule, by adding the words, 'And said delegates must be male members' after the words, 'two lay delegates for an annual conference;' so that it will read, 'nor of more than two lay delegates for an annual conference, and said delegates must be male members.' "

The remainder of the proposition of Dr. Hamilton pointed out the manner in which the proposition was to be sent down, and the result of the failure to carry the measure by a three-fourths' vote of the annual conferences. Unless the new definition of the Judiciary Committee was thus sustained, women were to be held eligible to membership in the General Conference.

By this form of approach to the annual conferences the burden of proof was thrown upon those who agreed with the Judiciary Committee. Hitherto this burden, which required them to obtain a three-fourths majority for their proposition, had been borne by the reformers. Thus the conservatives were compelled to face the works behind which they had for-

merly fought. When this state of the case was fully realized, there was such a scene of contention in the Church as had not been witnessed since the "irrepressible conflict" in 1844.

There was a difficulty in the way of "the Hamilton Amendment," as it was popularly known, for which the bill itself was not responsible. That proposition was a simple one, based on the approval or disapproval of the new definition of the Judiciary Committee; but the popular mind at once overleaped this primary feature of the case, and fixed itself upon the possible result of the vote. Hence it began to be said, by way of explanation, "If you are in favor of the women, vote against the amendment; if you are against them, vote for it."

For this putting of the case, and not for the actual form of the "amendment," the measure was denounced as "unconstitutional" and "revolutionary," with many shorter terms of similar import. "This negative way of voting" was held up as evidence of bad faith; and so industriously was this objection pushed that there began to be some confusion in the minds of those who were to vote on the question, as to whether the proposition were regular and legal or not.

In consequence of this, the Colorado Annual Conference sent out another proposition, which proposed directly an addition to the Second Restrictive Rule of the words, "and such delegates may be either men or women." This restored the familiar manner of voting, put the burden of proof back on the shoulders of those who had always carried it; and the Conferences which had not voted either substituted the Colorado for the Hamilton Amendment, voted on both questions, or refused to vote at all. The voting-lists on both these propositions thereafter appeared in the Church papers side by side.

The following figures on this dual vote, which, in the nature of the case, could be combined, are taken from the *Daily Christian Advocate* of the General Conference of 1896:

For the "Hamilton Amendment;" that is to say, for the new definition of the words "laymen" and "lay delegates," reported by the Judiciary Committee at the General Conference of 1892, said definition making the words to signify "men only," 474; against said definition, 3,748.

For the Colorado proposition; that is to say, for the addition of the words, "and such delegates may be either men or women," to the Second Restrictive Rule, 7,554; against such addition, 2,605.

It thus appears that the Hamilton Amendment, and with it the new definition as above stated, was *lost* by a three-fourths' vote of those voting on it, with 580 votes to spare.

The Colorado proposition was also *lost* for want of sixty-five votes.

On the strength of the above showing, four women were elected as lay delegates to the General Conference of 1896: Jane F. Bashford, Ohio; Ada C. Butcher, North India; Lois S. Parker, North India; Lydia Trimble, Foochow. The first three of these delegates appeared at the first session; the fourth arrived soon after. Their names had been duly entered on the roll of the Conference, and were also duly called.

On the call of the name of Miss Trimble, whose conference came first in alphabetical order, a motion was made, with intent to keep her out of her seat until her right thereto "could be properly determined by a committee of the body;" but the presiding officer, with a sense of the temper of the house, ruled the motion out of order, on the ground that the Conference was not yet organized, and the presence of a quorum had not yet been officially announced. The other names of women were called in due course. They answered to their names, and thus, beyond all contradiction, they were members of the General Conference, and would continue such until the Conference should put them out.

A paper—half challenge, half protest—was presented by J. M. Buckley; but as it did not contain the names of the women whose eligibility it disputed, it was held to be of no official force. Dr. Buckley, later on, moved the appointment of a Committee on the Eligibility of Women to Membership in the General Conference, to which the cases of the women who had been admitted by roll-call should be referred. Carried. (See Journal, General Conference, 1896, p. 83.)

A delegate desired to know what would be the status of the women in question in the meantime, whereupon J. B. Graw, the same member who had attempted to prevent the calling

of the names of women in the roll of the Conference, moved "that no persons whose eligibility has been challenged shall be permitted to participate in the deliberations of this Conference until the committee shall have reported." Upon this cries of "No! no! no!" were heard from all over the floor of the house, and, on motion of A. B. Leonard, by an almost unanimous vote, the motion of J. B. Graw was laid on the table. Thus again the actual membership of the women delegates was confirmed.

On the 4th of May the majority report of the Committee on Eligibility of Women was presented, which declared that the challenge of the women delegates was not sustained, and they were "not ineligible to this body." The report was signed by A. J. Kynett, Chairman; John W. Hamilton, David H. Moore, A. B. Leonard, Earl Cranston, E. T. Nelson, Samuel Dickie, and others.

A long minority report was presented by T. B. Neely, which concluded by declaring that "to seat the contestants would tend to destroy all respect for the Constitution of the Church, and for the interpretations and decisions of the General Conference." The document was signed by H. R. Brill, J. B. Graw, J. M. Buckley, C. J. Little, Jacob Rothweiler, T. B. Neely, and others. The consideration of the subject involved in the two reports was set for ten o'clock in the morning of the following day.

In due course the great debate came on—great only as to its length; for it consisted of the old, well-worn arguments which, by tongue or pen, had kept the Church in more or less of turmoil for nearly a third of a quadrennium.

On the 6th of May, "A. B. Leonard moved to recommit the majority and minority reports, with instructions to find, if possible, a common ground of agreement, and report after the reading of the Journal to-morrow morning. Carried." (Journal, p. 102.)

This weakening on the part of the leaders of the majority, with a full and final victory already within their reach, is difficult to account for. It transpired that Dr. Buckley, Dr. Graw, with perhaps other leaders of the opposition, insisted that their position in the case was a stern matter of conscience,

based on the words of Holy Scripture, and that therefore they could never abandon it; but they took no account of the equally tender consciences of those who were opposed to their theories and interpretations. Another of the same party professed unalterable loyalty to "the Constitution," and from his position he never could be moved; therefore the leaders of the majority consented to fight the whole battle over again, with the view of finding "common ground."

But "common ground" was not the prime requirement in the case. By consenting to a recommitment, the majority of the body lost its clear command of the situation; and the inevitable compromise report soon followed, which they now felt in honor bound to accept.

The leaders of the minority, in private council, professed their great desire that, as the battle was lost to them, the women might be admitted in a "constitutional way," and not in the questionable attitude which they then occupied on account of the irregular voting in the annual conferences. Therefore it would be necessary, said they, to have the question of the eligibility of women to membership in the General Conference voted on once more by the annual conferences in a direct and "constitutional" manner so that hereafter there could be no dispute over their position. All this, and victory besides, the compromise report conceded, as the following quotations from the document will sufficiently show. Much of its space was taken up with details of the plan of voting on the question; but the vital points were as follows:

"*Resolved*, 2. That in consideration of the general desire for the early and final settlement of the whole question, and in view of the proposed submission to the annual conferences, we recommend that no formal decision of the question of eligibility be made at this time.

"The challenge not having been judicially passed upon, those occupying the seats in question do so under a title in dispute, yet without prejudice to the rights of either the challengers or the challenged, and without establishing a precedent."

The Conference had become wearied of the subject, and to be rid of it, even with some loss in the premises, was a relief. Besides, it was a compromise, a piece of "common ground" immensely smaller than what they had possessed before the

argument began; but, after all, it was not exactly their own quarrel. Time was passing, and, accordingly, the halfway surrender was ratified by a joint yea and nay vote, as follows:

For the compromise plan (as above stated), 425.

Against the compromise plan (as above stated), 98.

Absent or not voting, 12.

Compromises may sometimes be useful as peacemakers, but more often they end in making more confusion. It was presumed that this proposition would be accepted by the annual conferences as a relief to the long-continued strife, and would be adopted with general consent. But such has not been the case. In some form or other the woman question still exists, and, because of "conscience" and "Constitution," there will, no doubt, be room for further history in the case.

It only remains to be stated that the four women who were forced to endure the above trying ordeal, after having their rights vindicated by repeated votes of the Conference, either directly or indirectly, withdrew from the seats which that poor "compromise" had left "contested;" and their faces were, officially, seen no more. As a final acknowledgment of their rights as members of the House, the fact becomes one of historic interest that, in the matter of allowances for travel, and otherwise, they were treated like other lay delegates to the General Conference of 1896.

Under the admirable administration of the General Conference Commission in 1896 there was no room for question concerning the right of lay delegates to receive the usual allowances as made to clerical members for expenses of travel. The treasury of the commission held ample funds for all legitimate costs incident to the great assembly. But the claim of lay delegates to have their expenses paid out of the funds of the Book Concern, as had previously been done, is manifestly an open disobedience of the Constitution of the General Conference, as contained in the Fifth Restrictive Rule.

CHAPTER VII.

CHURCH INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIETIES.

THE Methodist Episcopal Church has become a great religious nation; and its various departments reach out their beneficent hands in countless and constant works of helpfulness. The Methodist population of the world, numbering over five millions of souls, and speaking in about thirty different tongues, makes occasion for a great system of organized charities, the like whereof, in some respects, the world has never seen. Prominent among these, and first in order of time, stands the

METHODIST BOOK CONCERN.

The earliest collateral work of the Wesleyan preachers was the circulation of Christian literature; and the earliest Methodist Book Concern was John Wesley himself. On his own responsibility, and at his own cost, the great leader became author, editor, and publisher of a whole library of useful volumes, which it was an important part of the duty of his "helpers" to persuade the people to buy. This "book-room" was the only and sufficient theological seminary for those itinerant preachers; and when some of them came over to America, they brought the book-room idea with them.

From the "minutes of some conversations between the preachers in connection with the Rev. Mr. John Wesley," published in Philadelphia in 1773, it appears that one Robert Williams had presumed to reprint some of Mr. Wesley's books without permission of the author, for which he was mildly reproved, thus:

"4. None of the preachers in America to reprint any of Mr. Wesley's books without his authority (when it can be gotten), and the consent of their brethren.

"5. Robert Williams to sell the books he has already printed; but to print no more, unless under the above restrictions."

The name of Williams appears in the list of "assistants" for 1774, but never in the list of appointments. Thus it would

appear that it was not solely on account of their sense of Mr. Wesley's property in the books, but to prevent the setting up of a private enterprise instead of one which the little conference could control, that the above direction was given.

That the preachers were not a "bookish" class of persons appears from the following, in the "Minutes" for 1781:

"*Ques.* 8. Ought not the preachers often to read the 'Rules of the Societies,' the 'Character of a Methodist,' and the 'Plain Account of Christian Perfection,' if they have them?

"*Answer.* Yes."

Small indeed must have been the library which did not include these important little books. But Asbury was determined to improve the literary status of his preachers, and, through them, of his people. This appears from the appointment of John Dickins as "Book Steward" at Philadelphia, and Philip Cox as "Traveling Book Steward." This was at the conference of 1789.

Dickins had the instincts of a scholar and the enthusiasm of a reformer. He had been educated partly in London and partly at the famous school at Eton, and, next to Bishop Coke, he was the most learned Methodist in America. His generous act of accepting the appointment as Book Steward, and furnishing the capital for the book-room himself, the amount being six hundred dollars—a considerable sum for those days—proves him to have been, in fortune as well as in learning, far above the average of the American preachers of that early day.

The following pen picture from that rare book, The Methodist Discipline for 1792, will be useful in setting forth the Methodist Book Concern in its day of small things:

"Of the Printing of Books and the Application of the Profits arising therefrom.

"*Ques.* 1. Who is employed to manage the printing business?

"*Answer.* John Dickins.

Ques. 2. What allowances shall be paid him annually for his services?

"*Answer* 1. 200 dollars for a dwelling-house and for a book-room.

"2. 80 dollars for a boy;

"3. 53⅓ dollars for firewood; and

"4. 333 dollars to clothe and feed himself, his wife, and his children.

"*Ques.* 3. What powers shall be granted him?

"*Answer* 1. To regulate the publications according to the finances.

"2. To complain to the district conferences if any preachers shall neglect to make due payment for books.

"3. To reprint from time to time such books or treatises as he and the other members of the Book Committee shall unanimously judge proper.

"*Ques.* 4. Who shall form the Book Committee?

"*Answer.* John Dickins, Thomas Haskins, and the preachers who are stationed in Philadelphia from time to time.

"*Ques.* 5. What sum of money shall be allowed distressed preachers out of the book fund till the next General Conference?

"*Answer.* 266⅔ dollars per annum (i. e., for all the distressed preachers, in the aggregate).

"*Ques.* 6. How is the money mentioned above, for the benefit of distressed preachers, to be drawn out of the book fund?

"*Answer.* By the bishop, according to the united judgment of himself and the district conferences." (Discipline of 1792, pages 57, 58.)

It was at the General Conference of 1792, that a loan of four thousand dollars was ordered to be made by the Book Stewards to that ill-fated institution, Cokesbury College. Three years afterwards the college building was destroyed by fire, and a portion of the loan was never repaid.

In 1789 the genesis of the long-time honorable *Methodist Magazine* appears. It was called *The Arminian Magazine*, after Mr. Wesley's magazine of the same denomination, and was largely a reprint of it. Only two volumes were issued. The *Methodist Magazine* was not successfully inaugurated until 1818, since which year it has been continually published (except in 1829) until the present, changed into a quarterly in 1830, and in 1885 into a bi-monthly review.

In 1798 Dickins died, a victim of the terrible epidemic, the yellow fever, which prevailed in the city of Philadelphia during the autumn of that year. His death was triumphant, a fitting close to a consecrated life. He was succeeded by Ezekiel Cooper.

At the General Conference of 1800, the "Book Committee" was ordered to be appointed by the Philadelphia Conference. In the Minutes of that session the name "Book Concern" for the first time appeared. At the General Conference of 1804,

held in the city of Baltimore, it was ordered that the Book-room be removed to New York; and the usual Local Book Committee, still in vogue, was to be appointed by the New York Conference. It was reported at that session, by Ezekiel Cooper, that the Book-room, which, in 1789, had been established on a debt of six hundred dollars, now possessed a clear capital of twenty-seven thousand dollars.

At first the profits of the business had been paid over to the Chartered Fund, to be used in connection therewith for the benefit of suffering preachers and the widows and orphans of deceased preachers; but now that the business was so greatly increased, the General Conference ordered that the money be divided directly among the seven annual conferences, each of which, "at all events," was to be allowed to draw from the Book-room treasury at least one hundred dollars a year.

Now also was appointed the first Standing Committee on the "Book Concern," as it was thereafter called, one from each annual conference. On the recommendation of this committee, the following catalogue of publications was ordered to be published:

"1. A Methodist Repository. To be edited by Dr. Coke.

"2. The Portrait of St. Paul, by John Fletcher.

"3. Memoirs of the Life of Rev. Peard Dickinson.

"4. The General Irish Hymn Book.

"5. The 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th volumes of Mr. Wesley's Sermons.

"6. The Ecclesiastical History, which Dr. Coke, by the solicitation of the Conference, is to prepare for the Committee.

"7. Mr. Wesley's Appeal. By desire, Dr. Coke is to adapt it to the circumstances and situation of the United States.

"8. Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament to be reprinted.

"9. Benson's Life of Fletcher.

"10. The Mourner.

"11. Cowper's translation of the Life of Madame Guion.

"12. Nineteen Conversations on the Death of Ignatius: From Writings of the Old Fathers.

"13. The Second Volume of Mr. Wesley's Journal." (See Journal of General Conference 1804, page 67.)

The first number on this catalogue appears to have been the name of a proposed series of books, after the fashion of Mr. Wesley's "Libraries." But Dr. Coke seems to have been

unable to prepare the first volume, and the plan was therefore never carried out. John Wilson, a member of the New York Conference, was at this time made Assistant Book Steward, the duties of the position including those of editor as well as publisher. This combination was continued until the establishment of the *Christian Advocate* in 1828.

For some years there was a contest at every General Conference over the location of the Book Concern, Philadelphia and Baltimore being standing applicants for the same. At the session of 1808, held in the city of Baltimore, it was voted that the institution be continued at New York. This fact is significant as showing that the center of Methodist influence was moving northward, though at the beginning Baltimore held that honorable distinction. At this time the institution had so far increased in importance that a separate chapter was devoted to it in the Discipline. The liberty of the Book Stewards was enlarged; and it was made the duty of presiding elders, as well as of preachers, to act as local agents and helpers in this department of Church work.

Possibly it might have been on account of the rival claims of the three chief Methodist cities to the location of the publishing-house that a state of things arose which, at the Conference of 1808, led to the resignation of Ezekiel Cooper, and to the call for private proposals for carrying on the business of the Concern. Peace presently prevailed; but, for reasons not now in sight, the term of service for the Book Stewards and editors was limited to eight years successively. (Journal of 1808, p. 92.)

In 1812, at New York, the General Conference again refused to remove the Book Concern to Baltimore. Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware, in spite of sharp opposition from the south, in the interest of Baltimore, were elected Book Stewards, and a small beginning of a depository was made in Philadelphia. Persistent Baltimore again, at the session of 1816, moved for a change of location; but the motion did not prevail. At this time, also, Joshua Soule attempted to open the way for the election of a layman to the office of Book Steward; but to this innovation the General Conference did not give its consent.

On motion of Peter Cartwright, a small beginning for an-

other depository was made, by appointing a person at Pittsburg to receive from New York, and forward to the presiding elders in the West such of the publications of the Book Concern as the preachers on their districts might require. A reason for this action is found in the frequent changes, by location and otherwise, in the incumbents of the Western pastorates.

In spite of the want of unity in the councils of the Church over its publishing interests, the business of the house so rapidly increased that, at the General Conference of 1816, its capital was estimated at eighty thousand dollars.

Perhaps it was on account of this unexpected prosperity that the following important change in the use of Book Concern profits was ordered by the Conference of 1816:

"*Resolved*, That the Book Committee at New York be authorized to estimate the sum required to defray the necessary expenses of the bishops' families, for which, agreeably to such estimate, they shall be authorized to draw on the Editor and General Book Steward." (General Conference Journal 1816, May 23d, page 173.)

Thus, financially at least, the bishopric was made a higher order of ministry. But there were only three bishops whose families were to be supported by the Book Concern; and for this, as well as other reasons growing out of the relations of the governors and the governed, no question appears to have been raised as to the straining, if not the breaking, of the Sixth Restrictive Rule. Bishops were certainly "traveling preachers;" and they might have been "distressed traveling preachers" if this "relief" had not been extended to them. But it is manifest that, under the strict interpretation of "the Constitution," so strongly urged by certain bishops at a later period, this use of the profits of the Book Concern was unconstitutional. It certainly was not mentioned in the Restrictive Rules; and there is nothing to show that it was contemplated by those who made them.

The rule having been relaxed in relation to the three great men, it was easy to use further liberty under it on behalf of smaller ones. Hence, at the same session, the deficit in the expenses of the Conference delegates was ordered to be paid out of the treasury of the Book Concern—a precedent which has been too frequently followed since that day. There have

been protests from time to time against this doubtful proceeding, but they have been received by the older members of the House as the vagary of some new member, who does not yet understand the elasticity of the Sixth Restrictive Rule.

Another illustration of this peculiarity in the Rule aforesaid is found in the gift of a thousand dollars to Joshua Soule over and above his regular salary as editor and General Book Steward. This was voted to him by the General Conference of 1816 as a token of the high appreciation in which his services were held during that specially embarrassing term. At the next session, a similar compliment was paid to Thomas Mason. But when a third retiring officer, under the eight-year limitation, asked for a repetition of the same favor, it was refused.*

Again, the interchange of personal courtesies between the various Methodist Connections had by this time become an established custom, and the expenses of the fraternal delegates to England, Canada, and other places were, as a matter of necessity, paid out of the treasury of the Book Concern.

Still further in the same direction, at the session of 1828, the Conference ordered that the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars per annum be paid to Bishop McKendree, "to meet his extra expenses," though at the same time it was "*Resolved*, That each annual conference shall pay its proportionate part towards the allowance of each one of the bishops." The failure of this latter method of raising episcopal salaries, which became more marked as the number of the bishops increased, at length left the burden of their support to fall almost entirely upon the Book Concern. On this account the importance of this prolific institution again appears. Without it, the Church would have been compelled in its middle period to be content with the same small proportion of general superintendents as were held to meet the requirements of the case in earlier and less expensive times.

At the General Conference of 1872 an important change was made, whereby the support of the Episcopate was laid directly upon the Church. An Episcopal Fund was established,

*The eight years' time-limit for General Book Stewards and Editors, which was established in 1808, was removed in 1836

from the treasury whereof the bishops were to be supported. There was still a reliance upon the Book Concern for any deficit in the case; but at the Conference of 1880 this last financial bond between the Book Concern and the Episcopate was severed, and the Episcopal Fund was made to carry the total expense of the general superintendency. It is pleasant to state in this connection, though not strictly appertaining to this history, that the fund referred to above meets its intended purpose, having usually a surplus in its treasury, paid directly by the membership of the Church.

In 1820 the Western Depository was established at Cincinnati, with Martin Ruter as Book Steward. A committee from the Ohio Annual Conference, after the manner at New York, was intrusted with the oversight of local affairs.

With the General Conference of 1828 a literary era opened in the Church. It was marked by the establishment of a weekly Methodist newspaper by the Book Concern at New York under the name and style of *The Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald.* This composite title was suggestive of the previous existence of three periodicals in the Church; to wit, *Zion's Herald,* in Boston, established in 1823; the *Christian Advocate,* in New York, commenced in 1826; and the *Missionary Journal,* in Charleston, S. C., the date of whose birth does not now appear. At the date above mentioned these three were combined in one under the administration of the Book Concern in New York, with Nathan Bangs as editor.

Up to this time the literary element in the Church was well represented by the *Methodist Magazine.* If any modern critic is disposed to complain of the contents of that very respectable periodical, let him remember that it was edited by men who were also carrying the business cares of the publishing-house, and all this at a time when the ministry was too busy to furnish, gratuitously, any large quantity of literary material. But with the establishment of the original *Christian Advocate* the commercial value of brain products came to be more fully recognized. Consequently the publications of the Book Concern, especially its varied material for the use of Sunday-schools, acquired a leading place in denominational literature.

THE BOOK CONCERN LITIGATION.

Although this subject has already been referred to in these pages, its great importance seems to require more extensive notice.

On the disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church by the action of the delegates of the southern conferences in the General Conference of 1844, it was agreed, by vote of the whole body, that, on the formation of a separate Church, to be composed of the annual conferences in the slaveholding states, the assets of the Book Concern should be divided between the two sections of the Methodist Episcopal Church according to the proportionate number of ministers in each of the two bodies. The south was to hold all the real estate and other business assets of the Concern at the depositories in Charleston, Richmond, and Nashville. The cash assets of the institution were to be divided, by the payment to accredited representatives of the southern section of the Church the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars annually until the whole claim was satisfied. The entire value of the Book Concern property was estimated to be seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

In order to do this, it was held to be necessary to change "the Sixth Restrictive Rule," by which the disposition of the property and profits of the Book Concern was specified. The subject was therefore sent down to the annual conferences. The southern conferences adopted the Plan of Separation, and proceeded to form themselves into the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. But there was so much opposition to the division of the property—not of the Church—on the part of members of some of the annual conferences that the required three-fourths' vote of those bodies was not obtained in favor of the Plan. Hence the General Conference of 1848 decided that the proposed division of the Book Concern could not, constitutionally, be made.

The Southern Church had, meantime, appointed a commission, to meet a similar commission from the north, for the purpose of consummating the division according to the Plan of Separation. But, under the decision of the Conference

of 1848, there was no power or process by which such a division could be made.

Under this embarrassing state of affairs the Commission of the Church South brought suit against the Agents of the Book Concern, both at New York and at Cincinnati. The plaintiffs were "Henry B. Bascom and others," the defendants for the eastern house were "George Lane and others," and for the western house, Swormstedt and Poe. The court for the Southern District of the State of New York was held by the Hon. Judges Nelson and Betts; that for the Western District of the United States Supreme Court was held by Judge H. H. Leavitt. The best-known name on the list of counsel for the plaintiffs was that of the Hon. Reverdy Johnson. On the side of the defendants appeared that prince of the Massachusetts bar, Hon. Rufus Choate.

The full report of the case at New York fills a large volume. There is space here for only a brief outline. If the basis of the decision of Judge Nelson is true, then the two sections of the Church were simply the divided parts of a substantial unity, which had, by agreement within itself, made a change in its mode of existence. The following brief quotations will show the striking attitude of Judge Nelson in this, to him, unfamiliar piece of litigation:

"When the annual conferences in the slaveholding states acted, and organized a Southern Church, as they did, the division of the Methodist Episcopal Church into two organizations became complete.

"As it respects the action of this body [the General Conference] in the matter of division, no one can pretend but that it proceeded upon the assumption of unquestioned power to erect the Church into two ecclesiastical establishments. . . . Two ecclesiastical organizations have taken the place of one.

"The Sixth Restrictive Rule has no connection with the question of the power of the General Conference to change the form of its organization. The powers conferred [by the annual conferences] on the General Conference are broad and unlimited. . . . The question of separation is left [by the Plan of Separation] to their southern brethren in the Church."

As proof of the power of the General Conference to divide the property of the Book Concern, the judge referred to

the fact which had appeared in evidence, that exactly the same thing had lately been done in the case of the claim of the Conference of Upper Canada.

In conclusion, his Honor said that, even allowing the force of the Sixth Restrictive Rule, as claimed by the defendants, the southern ministers might be entitled to their share of the property of the Book Concern, as they came within the description of that rule—they were still laboring in the Church, and they were of that very class of persons who had heretofore been in the enjoyment of that advantage, and "for whom it was originally intended." Hence, said Judge Nelson, "the complainants are entitled to their share in the Methodist Book Concern, and a decree will be ordered accordingly." (See report of decision of Judge Nelson in *Western Christian Advocate*, December 3, 1851.)

The division of the property of the Book Concern held by the eastern house was made in accordance with Judge Nelson's decision, on the basis of the Plan of Separation. Thus a little more than one-third of its entire assets passed into the hands of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The final proceedings in respect to the western house, as shown by the original records in the case, were of the nature of an arbitration. Suit was brought by the commissioners of the Southern Church against the western Agents, Swormstedt and Poe, in the Western Circuit of the Supreme Court, at Cincinnati. Judge McLean, the presiding judge, being a Methodist, declined to hear the case, and it was argued before Judge H. H. Leavitt, of the District Court. His decision was in favor of the defendants. The southern commissioners then were about to appeal the case to the full bench of the Supreme Court at Washington, whereupon, as the decision at the east had been in favor of the Southern Church, the western Agents surrendered their standing under the decision of Judge Leavitt, and a *pro rata* division of the property of the western section of the Book Concern was made, under the sanction of the Supreme Court.

It may be well understood that such a sweeping reduction of its assets caused no little embarrassment to the establishment; but the emergency was successfully passed, and in a

few years the Concern at the north was stronger than ever; while the Southern Church were possessed of a publishing-house which ranked as the first in the slaveholding states of the Union. The records of the above legal proceedings and arbitration show a rare courtesy of manner on the part of all concerned. If a suit at law was inevitable—and the action of the northern annual conferences left no other alternative—a less objectionable one than that above mentioned could not well be imagined.

For more than half a century the Methodist Book Concern has been one of the greatest, as it is certainly the oldest of the organic institutions of the Church. Its multiplied publications have contributed to the unity as well as the intelligence of the Methodist fraternity; and with its multiplied departments and its varied forms of financial assistance, it has stood for an amount of practical benevolence equaled only by that of the General Missionary Society.

Since the close of its formative period, few changes have been made in the methods of its administration. The Standing Committee on the Book Concern in the General Conference of 1896 numbered one hundred and twenty-five men, ministers and laymen—a body far too large to deal with any but general principles and questions. With the growth of the Church, thus indicated, has come the inevitable concentration of power, until now it may be said that, on the one hand, the Book Committee is the General Conference, and, on the other hand, the Publishing Agents are the Book Concern.

The ultimate ownership of this great estate is the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in whose behalf the delegated General Conference exercises a control. The Conference, in turn, delegates the most of its duty in the examination and supervision of the institution to the Standing Committee on the Book Concern, which reports its findings and proposals to the whole body for approval. The final action of the House goes into the Discipline, and forms a part of the statute law of the Church. This may be called the legislative department of the institution.

At the head of the executive department of its two sections stand the Publishing Agents. Each of these sections has its

own charter under the general law of the state within which it is located. According to these charters, Eaton & Mains, both before the law and before the Church, *are* the Methodist Book Concern; and Curts & Jennings are the Western Methodist Book Concern. (See Act of Incorporation of The Western Methodist Book Concern, Hamilton County Records, Church Records Book No. 2, page 248, date of June 11, 1868.)

Between the General Conference and the Agents of the Book Concern stands the Book Committee, consisting of one member for each of the fourteen General Conference Districts, into which the entire Church is divided. There is also a Local Committee of three laymen, residing in New York or vicinity, and a similar committee residing in or near Cincinnati. These twenty persons are the General Conference during the interim of the sessions of that body, in the same sense in which the four Publishing Agents are the Book Concern. For convenience, the Book Committee divides itself into two bodies, known as the Eastern and Western Sections, the former having supervision of the Concern in New York and its dependencies, the latter having similar control in Cincinnati and its dependencies. The entire Committee has one annual meeting, beginning on the second Wednesday in February; each of the Sections having also an annual meeting at the place of, and on the day previous to, the annual meeting. The Local Committees have a monthly meeting to examine into the business of their Section of the Concern for the preceding month, and their report is submitted to the Section of the Committee to which they belong at its own annual meeting. In this way an almost perfect system of audit is secured, as well as a full and prompt control of all the departments of the entire institution.

Under this system the capital of the Book Concern has attained the proportions set down in the following Report for its fiscal year ending October 31, 1896:

Capital of Eastern House	$2,606,595 54
Capital of Western House	1,341,587 18

As a benevolent institution also the Book Concern ranks among the greatest in the Church. Besides supplying funds for the various connectional expenses not otherwise provided for,

in the year 1896 the sum of $125,000 was paid over to the several annual conferences, to be by them distributed to the conference claimants.

It seems evident that the clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church is not wanting in business talent; for, with a single exception, already noted, every agent and editor elected by the General Conference to serve on the official staff of the Book Concern has been in full and regular connection with the ministry of the Church.

THE GENERAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The early Methodists on the American frontier were somewhat excusable for their want of interest in the vast scheme of the world's evangelization. In one sense they were foreign missionaries themselves. The Indians about them were veritable heathen; a class of heathen, indeed, whose gospeling was one of the most difficult of missionary enterprises. In the records of some of the early frontier conferences may be read opposite the names of some itinerant preachers, "Killed by the Indians," "Murdered by the Indians." This was normal, a thing to be expected, no less than death by fever or drowning.

But some of the Methodist people in the towns at an early period began to feel moved by the Holy Ghost to do something for the salvation of the great masses of mankind who were without God and without hope in the world. Thus it was that in the year 1819 a combined Missionary and Bible Society was formed in the city of New York. It began with an imposing list of officers and managers; but its meetings soon dwindled away until almost the only man whose faith did not fail was Joshua Soule, one of the Book Stewards of the Methodist Book Concern.

Of this first missionary treasurer in the infant Church, the late venerable Dr. J. M. Reid, in his "History of Missions," has the following record:

"Rev. Joshua Soule at one of the meetings of the Board, when very few were present, and when the whole outlook was gloomy indeed, said: 'The time will come when every man who assisted in the organization of this society, and persevered in the undertaking, will consider it one of the most honorable periods of his life.'" (History Missionary Society, page 21.)

But the early Methodists, with few exceptions, were what Abraham Lincoln would have called "plain people." Their minds and hearts were not equal to the great prophetic view of the situation taken by such men as Soule and Bangs. The vastness of the scope of this new enterprise was urged against it. Are not the hands of our preachers and people more than full of work already? Who can tell where this thing will stop? Visionary people will not be satisfied with sending out missionaries to convert the Indians, but they would some day be wild enough to ask for money to establish missions among the swarming millions in India, and China, and the isles afar off!

Thus the new Missionary Society came into disfavor. No less than eight of the original Board of Managers resigned their offices during the first year of its existence, and if it had not been for the two stewards of the Methodist Book Concern, Soule and Bangs, the enterprise must have sunk out of sight.

At its session in 1820, held in the city of Baltimore, the General Conference indorsed the new society, and such an impetus was given it thereby that the late missionary secretary, Dr. J. M. Reid, affirms that "the existence of the society must really date from the General Conference of 1820." (History Missionary Society, page 25.) The prior work of the Woman's Missionary Society at New York, and of the Philadelphia Conference Missionary Society, together with other important early movements in the same direction, do not lie within the province of the present volume. For an admirable record of the entire missionary history of the Church, readers are referred to the work of Rev. Dr. Reid, above mentioned.

The General Conference of 1820 secured changes in the Constitution of the society, one of which was the separation of the two departments, mission work and Bible work, the latter having already a life and field of its own. Branch societies were advised or ordered to be formed in the annual conferences and in the local Churches, which were to transmit their collections to the General Book Stewards at New York, who were appointed *ex-officio* treasurers of the institution. But at the General Conference of 1828 the funds, which had been accumulating for eight years, amounted to only a hundred and sixty-seven dollars and eleven cents.

In 1833 the first foreign mission of the society was commenced in Liberia. With a definite object before them, the Churches began to awake to the practical reality of the cause. Donations increased, a number of persons came forward and offered themselves for service under the society; and a steady advance was made in receipts until, at the Conference of 1836, they amounted to nearly $60,000.

At the date above mentioned the General Conference made itself the responsible head of the Missionary Society, by electing Nathan Bangs as "Resident Corresponding Secretary" at New York. In 1840, William Capers and Edward R. Ames were associated with Dr. Bangs, Capers to promote the interests of the society in the south, and Ames in the west. But the disturbed condition of the Church in 1844 led to their retirement, and Dr. Bangs presently resigned his post to accept the presidency of the Wesleyan University at Middletown, Conn. His successor was Rev. Charles Pitman, of the New Jersey Conference, who in 1850 was succeeded by the ever-to-be-remembered John P. Durbin. This brings the account of the society down to a period within the memory of many now living, and with the opening of the career of this first great missionary secretary the personal record in this chapter closes. All matters of personal and official interest of later date may be found in the chronological history of the General Conference, contained in Part I of this volume.

CONSTITUTION OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

In its original form the Constitution of "The Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America" contemplated chiefly the extension of the missionary work of the annual conferences "throughout the United States and elsewhere," the last two words being merely a vague suggestion of the distant possibilities of the case.

By the revised Constitution of 1836 the bishops were authorized to establish missions, appoint missionaries, and pay their expenses by drafts on the treasury of the society. In 1844 the General Conference again modified the Constitution, so as to take from the New York Annual Conference the power of filling vacancies in the office of corresponding secretary, and give it

to the bishops. Thus it was by the Episcopal Board that Dr. Durbin came to the throne.

The General Conference of 1844 caused the territory of the Church to be divided into as many mission districts as there were effective bishops—five at the close of that session—and each bishop was to appoint one man from his mission district, to constitute, with the bishops, the General Missionary Committee. This committee was to meet annually in the city of New York, and, jointly with the Board of Managers, Corresponding Secretary, and Treasurer, they were to make the appropriations for the work of the ensuing year, both for domestic and for foreign missions.

The division above mentioned was afterwards objected to, on the ground that it was never generally understood by the Church, and also that "missionary money" was raised almost entirely by appeals for the work in foreign lands. On this account efforts have been repeatedly made to divide the society itself into two distinct and separate bodies; one to be called the Home Missionary Society, and the other the Foreign Missionary Society. But the foreign missionary interest has always been numerically weak in the General Conference, and the proposed change has not prevailed.

At the General Conference of 1864 the bishops were vested with full powers to administer the missions of the society during the interim of the General Conference. Thus, with the Great Council, the Episcopal Board, the Corresponding Secretaries, the Board of Managers, and the General Missionary Committee, some of the missionaries have been of the opinion that the society labored under a superabundance of government, and that, too, by those who, with the exception of the bishops, had no personal knowledge of the field.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION.

At the session of the General Conference in 1872, so many changes were made in the form and work of the society that a new charter was required. This was granted by the legislature of the state of New York in the year 1873; and, together with the additions made by the Conferences of 1876 and 1888, it has remained as the legal basis and the governing code of this great

institution, which may be said to have become the crowning glory of the Church.

At the General Conference of 1896 an important amendment was made to the Constitution of the Missionary Society, with the view of preventing, as far as possible, the incurring of debts for the current work of the society. It was offered by the Senior Missionary Secretary, A. B. Leonard, as follows:

"The General Committee shall not appropriate more for a given year than the total income of the society for the year immediately preceding." (Journal of General Conference 1896, page 304.)

THE MISSIONARY BISHOPRIC.

It was in connection with the society's first mission in Liberia, which was established in 1833, that the question of a Missionary Episcopate first arose. The feebleness of that enterprise, its great distance from the Methodist center, and its climate, which was supposed to be almost certainly fatal to white men, were the reasons alleged for the election of a Negro Missionary Bishop for Africa. Bishop Scott, who visited that field in 1852, urged a closer connection with the mission, by more frequent visitations from home; but the counsels of the semi-political party in the General Conference of 1856 prevailed, and the Liberia Conference was permitted to elect a candidate, who should appear in New York for episcopal ordination. Accordingly, in 1858, Francis Burns, and in 1866 his successor, John W. Roberts, were constituted Missionary Bishops for Africa.

In 1884, a vacancy having occurred, the General Conference elected William Taylor as Missionary Bishop of Africa.

The event of his election was a memorable one. No small tempest lay on the Conference as to the policy to be pursued. No Negro delegate could be found who would accept the office, and it was not at all attractive to white men. At length, after a number of nominations and declinations had been made, the name of that intrepid pioneer evangelist, William Taylor, was mentioned. The effect was electric. Not a Negro would go to Africa; but here was a white man who was ready to go to the ends of the earth on the shortest possible notice. As a located elder his status was that of a layman, and he sat as lay

delegate from South India. But he was none the less a Methodist minister, and might be made a Methodist bishop. This was presently and joyfully done, whereby the Church soon came into more vital relations with its work on "The Dark Continent."

At the session of 1888 there were calls from the missionary conferences for a resident Episcopacy, both in Europe and Asia. Africa had all the Episcopacy she needed, in the person of her heroic William Taylor. At the previous session this measure had failed, and the same fate was again accorded to it. On this account the India delegations fell back on the idea of a Missionary Episcopate, and James M. Thoburn, who for thirty years had rendered successful service as missionary in India, was, on their nomination, elected as Missionary Bishop for India and Malaysia.

The Church now had two classes of bishops, a state of things from which confusion might well be expected to arise. On account of the wonderful success of the missions in India during the eight following years, the questions naturally growing out of the Missionary Bishopric were not made prominent. But at the session of the General Conference of 1896, at Cleveland, the subject received much attention, and an important change was made in the Disciplinary Chapter on Missionary Bishops.

The chapter in question opens with the statement, "A Missionary Bishop is a Bishop," etc. There were some at Cleveland who seemed to have read it, "A Missionary Bishop is a missionary," etc. But the final action of the Conference on that occasion secured the recognition of the full episcopal rank of the Missionary Bishops, and at the same time provided for a quadrennial official visit of a general superintendent, to whom, at such times, the Missionary Bishop should be a coadjutor. This will appear in the following quotations from paragraph 181 of the Discipline of 1896:

"A Missionary Bishop is not subordinate to the general superintendents; but is co-ordinate with them in authority in the field to which he is appointed." . . . "Arrangements shall be made so that once in every quadrennium, and not oftener, unless a serious emergency arise, every mission over which a Missionary Bishop has jurisdiction shall be administered conjointly by the general superintendents and the Missionary Bishop. In case of a difference

of judgment the existing status shall continue, unless overruled by the general superintendents, who shall have power to decide finally."

Thus the Missionary Bishopric, once in every quadrennium, is subordinate to the general superintendency. But for the remainder of the time, the Missionary Bishop is, like the general superintendents, subordinate only to the General Conference.

At the same session, in view of the requests for a full resident Episcopate by delegates from Japan, China, and Mexico, a report was introduced from the Committee on Episcopacy, permitting episcopal residences abroad. This action had already been decided by the Judiciary Committee to be constitutional; but as the subject, in its final form, did not appear until a late period in the session, no favorable action was possible at that time. The above fact is of value as showing the trend of opinion on this important question, which looks to the unification of the episcopate, and thus to the more perfect unification of the Church and her world-wide system of missions.

The action of the General Conference of 1896 in placing Bishop Taylor on the non-effective list was followed by the election of Rev. J. C. Hartzell, D. D., as his successor. To him Bishop Taylor made over all the various missionary funds and properties held by him in Africa and elsewhere, and straightway took ship for South Africa, to visit once more that attractive Kaffirland, in which, many years before, some of his most successful evangelistic work had been performed.

A request for an additional Missionary Bishop for India was urged at the Conference of 1896; but it was not granted. Thoburn for India and Malaysia, and Hartzell for Africa, comprise the entire missionary episcopate of the Church, the field traversed by each of them being larger than the United States.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHURCH WORK IN THE SOUTH.

THE relation of the General Conference to the subject of slavery has already been considered. It now remains to treat of the status and work of the Church in the south resulting from the Civil War.

According to the Plan of Separation conditionally adopted by the memorable Conference of 1844, annual conferences in border states were to make choice of their positions on either the northern or southern side of the proposed boundary. But, even before the war, it was discovered to be a very difficult matter to separate masses of Christians according to their opinions, and at the same time to follow geographical lines. Border conferences and border Churches contained members with opposite preferences, and no small contention arose over the effort to carry the Plan of Separation into effect.

Border Methodism was never a unit on the subject of slavery, nor on the division of the Church; nor yet on the division of the nation. It will be remembered that it was the Baltimore Conference delegation in the General Conference of 1844 which furnished the leader of the attack on Bishop Andrew. It was observed that when a man in a slave state came to regard slavery from a strictly Christian standpoint, he came to be the most determined foe of the "peculiar institution." Besides, the Plan of Separation was acted upon by the southern section of the Church without waiting for the result of the vote of the annual conferences thereon; and when this result showed the failure of the plan in the northern conferences, there was still further room for dispute. Thus there was never a very definite Methodist dividing line between the two sections of the disrupted body, a state of things which invited confusion, and made it possible for even good men to cross the indefinite frontier without any sense of wrong.

The Church from its beginning had found slavery to be a prolific source of trouble; nor did the troubles all disappear

when slavery disappeared. The war itself had its religious side, and thereby still other roots of bitterness were planted, from which appeared a plentiful crop.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH ENTERS THE SOUTH.

How did the Methodist Episcopal Church re-enter the south?

It entered through the doors only partly closed by the Plan of Separation, and through those which were swung wide open by the fortunes of war.

The presence of northern men with guns in their hands was bad enough; but southern Christians could endure this affliction as one of the inevitable calamities which make up so large a proportion of human history. They could defend their religion in battle, while their fathers and mothers and wives and children prayed for them at home and in the sanctuary. But when northern religion, as well as northern politics, came down upon them, it was too much for certain kinds of flesh and blood to bear.

As the tides of war swept over the states in rebellion, large numbers of church edifices were deserted by their pastors, who had laid down the crosier to take up the sword. These unused houses of worship were found convenient for hospital use, first for one army, and then for the other, as the varying fortunes of the great conflict ebbed and flowed. Other Churches, whose ministers were past the military age, were held as Confederate "high-places," where sacrifices to the pro-slavery god of battles were constantly on the altar.

With the capture of New Orleans and its contiguous territory, General Butler observed that the prayers of the southern clergy were very effectual in rousing and sustaining the spirit of rebellion; and, instead of leaving the case to be prayed out by the two classes of suppliants south and north, he undertook, in a measure, to settle the question himself. Accordingly, on each Lord's-day, Union soldiers were sent to prevent rebellious preaching and praying in the places of southern worship. But his authority fell short of the supposed requirement in the case; for when the time for imploring the Divine blessing on the

Confederate arms and on the Confederate wounded in the hospitals came, the minister would call for a season of silent prayer. Thus the prayers escaped the guard below, and were doubtless taken at full value above.

Butler's next movement was to close some of the southern churches; and these, together with some which had long been vacant, he proposed to have turned over to the War Department at Washington, with a view to having them used by loyal ministers of their respective denominations. Among these houses of worship were some belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which, by order of the War Department as above mentioned, were turned over to Bishop Ames, to be administered by him under the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The order for this purpose was as follows:

"WAR DEPARTMENT,
"ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
"WASHINGTON, November 30, 1863.

"To the Generals commanding the Department of Missouri, the Tennessee, and the Gulf, and all Generals commanding armies, detachments, and corps, and posts, and all officers in the service of the United States in the above mentioned Department:

"You are hereby directed to place at the disposal of Rev. Bishop Ames all houses of worship belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in which a loyal minister, who has been appointed by a loyal bishop of said Church, does not now officiate.

"It is a matter of great importance to the Government, in its efforts to restore tranquillity to the community and peace to the Nation, that Christian ministers should, by example and precept, support and foster the loyal sentiment of the people. Bishop Ames enjoys the entire confidence of this Department, and no doubt is entertained that all ministers appointed by him will be entirely loyal. You are expected to give him all the aid, countenance, and support practicable in the execution of his important mission.

"You are authorized and directed to furnish Bishop Ames and his clerk with transportation and subsistence when it can be done without prejudice to the service, and will afford them courtesy, assistance, and protection.

"By order of the Secretary of War,

"E. D. TOWNSEND,
"*Assistant Adjutant-General.*"

Similar authority was given to representatives of other loyal Christian communions, so that Northern Presbyterians, Baptists, and others came to hold possession of churches in cap-

tured territory, some of which were vacant by the flight of the pastors, and others by the operation of martial law. Doubtless there were more such instances in the southern Methodist body than in any other, that being the principal denomination in the rebel states.

The Rev. J. P. Newman, D. D., was, under the above authority, appointed to the charge of the Carondelet Street Church in New Orleans, the principal edifice belonging to Methodism in the state of Louisiana, if not in the whole south. During the occupation of the Crescent City by the Union forces, this came to be the great loyal religious headquarters, and the chief congregation in the city.

The holding of Christian sanctuaries as trophies of war is no new thing. Colonial churches were thus held and used by British troops in the War of the Revolution. But when northern Methodists, by military authority, possessed themselves of the property of their former brethren, an estrangement between the two sections of the once united Church was produced, more bitter even than that produced by the war itself. There were numbers of Negro churches also, which, by the ready concurrence of their congregations, came under the authority of Bishop Ames.

After the close of the war all the southern white congregations came again into possession of their churches; but the Negro churches, built largely by the money of the slave-masters, were still retained under the authority of the General Conference as represented by Bishop Simpson and Bishop Ames, both of whom took an active part in the administration of this delicate business. White Union Methodists having now no place of worship in New Orleans, Ames Methodist Episcopal Church was erected, and here Dr. Newman, and following him Dr. Hartzell, held the fort for loyalty to the Nation, as well as for the faith once delivered to the saints.

The men with guns in their hands at length disappeared from the south; but there were Methodist preachers, with the Discipline of the old-time Church in their hands, who had come to stay. After the war the Union Methodists in the southern Church left that Communion, and joined the congregations of these northern ministers; so that within a single gen-

eration the Methodist Episcopal Church, counting both white and colored people, had one-fifth of its entire membership in the territory once occupied by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The General Conference, which had proceeded on the assumption that a Negro might be as good a Christian as any other man, now advanced a step, and after emancipation took the ground that a Negro was as free as any other man. Beyond this that body was not prepared to go. Nor was it needful. All the good that could be done to and for the Freedman could be done for him on that basis. But it could not be expected that southern white Unionists and southern colored Unionists would fraternize, even in a Church politically congenial to both. The Negroes were gloriously conscious that they were slaves no longer, and the whites, particularly the "poor whites," felt the vital importance of maintaining their superiority of blood. Add to this the old war spirit, buried before it was dead, and it would appear that the Great Council had a problem on its hands the most difficult of any since the Christian Era began.

THE FREEDMEN'S AID SOCIETY.

In the month of August, 1866, in the city of Cincinnati, the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. Its first president was Bishop Davis W. Clark. Its first corresponding secretary was Dr. John M. Walden. Its first general field superintendent was Rev. Richard S. Rust, D. D.

The importance of the work proposed by this society, as indicated by its name, was at once recognized by the Church. The General Conference of 1868 commended it, and the session of 1872 adopted it as a regular Church society. This was the hand of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, reached out and down into the old slave land, to lift and guide the millions of "boys"—as male slaves were commonly called in the south—who had suddenly been thrust into the places and responsibilities of men.

It had been a part of the worldly wisdom of the south to prevent the education of slaves. Learning would make them

"impudent" and dangerous. But just this danger-inviting policy was now to be carried out by the accredited representatives of northern Churches all over the great southland, still smoking with the fires of civil war. If anything could blow these hot embers into flame it was the work of the Freedmen's Aid Society and other similar "incendiary" propaganda on the basis of the detested Emancipation Proclamation. The fires did in many places blaze up again; but the preachers and teachers went on with their work. Southern Methodists "ostracized" them. This did them no harm. Then certain rude fellows of the baser sort persecuted them. This strengthened their patience. Finally assassins were set to murder some of them, and large numbers of their Negro pupils as well. Thus the Freedmen's Aid Society and its wards furnished some companies of recruits for "the noble army of martyrs." *But still the work went on.*

There is another fact underlying this constant miracle, which ought to be set forth in this connection; viz., the patience, good faith, and good nature of the Negro race. The "boys" had made a reputation; had won a character. Southern white men, who had safely trusted their homes and their plantations to their slaves while they were away fighting to perpetuate their slavery, could the more easily trust the ex-slaves with spelling-books and Bibles.

THE COLOR LINE, 1766-1896.

From the first the status of the Negro in the Methodist Episcopal Church has been the highest which he has anywhere reached. Under the administry of Asbury and the other early "helpers" and "assistants" of Wesley in America, all of whom were Englishmen, the slave was reckoned as a man, who had a soul to be saved. It thus appears to have been a part of the purpose of Divine Providence, for the especial benefit of the Negro race, that Methodism should be of foreign importation, and not an indigenous growth on American soil. A Church having its beginning in Maryland, Virginia, or the Carolinas would have partaken of and been colored by "the peculiar institution," even if, as in the case of the Confederacy, slavery had not been "its chief cornerstone."

Think of a bishop who, when he is ill, sends his Negro

servant into the pulpit to preach for him! What white bishop in any other Church ever did such a thing?

If it be said that no other white bishop ever had a Negro servant who could preach as well as Black Harry, the reply at once suggests itself: Wesleyan Methodism, as established in America, was the school in which this African Apollos was trained. In that age of the world there was no other theological seminary which received and sent out such pupils. Nor was this an exceptional case. The General Conference, which had long before provided for the licensing of colored preachers, did, in 1824, enact:

> **"That our colored preachers and official members have all the privileges in the district and quarterly meeting conferences which the usages of the country in different sections will justify; *Provided*, also that the presiding elder may, when there is a sufficient number, hold for them a separate district conference."**

Thus the ministerial status of Methodist slaves, who were local preachers, was recognized by the highest authority in the Church.

It has already been mentioned in these pages that a considerable part of the membership of the early Methodist "societies" was composed of slaves. Master and servant, under these auspices, met and sung and prayed and shouted together, the last named function, indeed, being chiefly performed by the colored members. If there was a class-meeting held in the parlor by the bishop or one of his preachers, there was also a class-meeting in the kitchen. If any one objects to this arrangement as being defiled by the caste spirit, it may be mournfully confessed that nowhere this side of heaven was there ever found a Church which had religion enough to abolish the distinction between parlor and kitchen.

It may be matter of surprise to some extreme radicals to learn that the "color line," which has given so much trouble in General Conference legislation, was first drawn by a congregation of colored Methodists in the city of Philadelphia, in the year 1794. At this date there was some dissatisfaction among the Negroes who worshiped along with the white people

at "Old St. George's." This resulted in their purchasing a blacksmith's shop, and fitting it up as a place of worship for themselves. When it was ready for its new use it was dedicated by Bishop Asbury, on the 29th of June, 1794.

On this occasion they adopted a platform, or declaration of principles, which document contained the following provision:

> **"We consider every child of God a member of the mystical body of Christ. . . . Yet in the political government of our Church we prohibit our white brethren from electing, or being elected into, any office among us save that of a preacher or public speaker." (Simpson's "Cyclopedia of Methodism," page 15.)**

The leader in this movement for separation on the color line was Richard Allen, the first Negro ever ordained to the ministry in America, if not in the world. That he did not at first contemplate the establishment of a separate sect of Methodists is evident from the fact that Bishop Asbury performed this ordination in the year 1799. By this time he had achieved the position of a widely-recognized leader among the people of color in the membership of the Methodist Church.

It is significant that Asbury, who had a horror of schisms, should have given this double sanction to this departure from the universally prevalent custom of mixed congregations in Methodist Churches. His hatred of slavery, his love for the slave, and his English leaning towards immediate emancipation, are beyond question. But his name and fame stand inseparably connected with the first recorded movement for separation of white and black Methodists on "the color line."

The practical wisdom of this division may be disputed, since it was the beginning of that first great departure of colored members from the original Methodist body in the year 1820, under the name of "The African Methodist Episcopal Church." Four years later there was another separation on the color line in the city of New York, the seceding colored flock taking the name of "The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church." The "Zion" in its name was in honor of the principal Church and congregation in the new Connection.

Both of these voluntary departures from the fellowship of

original American Methodism so far gave proof of their grateful memory of their mother Church, as to establish themselves on the basis of her Discipline. Both came to be large Communions, even before the war, and at its close they contained no less than twenty-seven annual conferences and about two hundred thousand members, their work covering most of the territory of the border states, and extending far into the south.

These independent Episcopal colored Methodist Churches were an embarrassment to the General Conference of the mother Church. They were ambitious, fond of offices and titles, and were able to create and confer these distinctions on their own people with a liberal hand. But the mother Church objected to lifting its colored members into places which they were not qualified to fill. In the first separate colored Churches included in white annual conferences the color-line was always drawn. The Negro pastors were only local preachers, and against the names of their charges, as they appeared in the Conference Minutes, were the words, "Left to be supplied." Thus while white preachers held appointment from the bishop, colored preachers held appointment from the presiding elder.

As early as 1844 this inequality was the cause of complaint, and at the Conference of that year a petition for the redress of this grievance was presented. The colored pastors asked to be admitted as members into the annual conferences within the bounds of which they were regularly employed. This request the Conference refused.

At this distance of time it would appear that there must have been some shallow places in the abolition sentiment of that memorable assembly. It was easy for a radical majority to suspend a southern bishop on account of a constructive connection with slavery; but that same majority was not equal to the task of opening the doors of its annual conferences for the admission of a northern Negro preacher. So slow, even at the north, was the growth of the sentiment that even free Negroes were to be admitted on the same terms as white men to the higher honors of the Church.

But the war was a schoolmaster to north as well as south, and the General Conference of 1864, while the din of battle

was still sounding in their ears, provided for the establishment of two colored annual conferences; to wit, the Washington Conference and the Delaware Conference, and also passed the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That justice to those who have been enslaved requires that, in all the privileges of citizenship, as well as in all other rights of a common manhood, there shall be no distinction founded on color."

Thus thereafter a Negro might be a "regular" Methodist preacher. And, further, as if to make amends for the slowness of the Conference in granting these men their rights, the Discipline was so far amended, or suspended, on their behalf, that they were excused from the required examinations in the courses of study laid down for (white) candidates for the ministry. (Journal General Conference 1864, page 263.) Under this merciful provision, Bishops Simpson and Ames, at the first sessions of these Negro conferences, ordained to the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church about eighty men of color, some of whom were not even able to read.

It was the policy of the General Conference, and of its official representative in the south—the Freedmen's Aid Society—to lead its wards and pupils as fast and as far as possible away from the old slave life. Hence they were encouraged to claim all their rights, both in Church and state. As a result of such encouragement, the nine mixed conferences sent white delegates to the General Conference of 1868, and the two colored conferences, Washington and Delaware, sent each its Negro representative. The appearance of these colored delegates, and of the men who represented colored constituencies, produced no little excitement. Chicago Methodism, as well as General Conference Methodism, was stirred to its depths. Radicals shouted and conservatives groaned over the proposed innovation. But the great majority of the body was in favor of seating the Negro and pro-Negro delegations, and a resolution to that effect was adopted by a vote of 197 yeas and 15 nays. Thus through wide-open gates the colored ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church entered into its "Governing Conference."

THE COLORED BISHOP QUESTION.

The next step upward for the rapidly-rising race was to be attended with greater difficulty.

The election of a Negro to the bishopric was no new thing. Bishop Burns and Bishop Roberts were Africans. But their diocese was in Africa. If the Freedman was to be like a white man, why should he not aspire to the highest office in his Church? Both of the Negro Methodist Episcopal Churches which had set up for themselves had a Board of Bishops of their own, a fact which was no small attraction to draw ambitious and talented young students away from service in the mother Church.

Besides, the Negro was growing stronger in the General Conference. At the session of 1880, held in Cincinnati, the sixteen mixed and colored conferences on the border and in the south were represented by sixty-seven delegates, thirty-two of whom were colored men. And now the Negroes and their friends resolved to make an effort towards securing a representative of the Negro race on the Episcopal Board. Their numerous memorials with this intent were duly referred to the Committee on Episcopacy, which committee, on the 20th of May, reported as follows:

"*Resolved* 1. That the best interests of the Church, and of our colored people in particular, require that one or more of our general superintendents should be of African descent.

"*Resolved*, 2. That we recommend that this General Conference elect one bishop of African descent."

In the great debate on this question the oratorical honors were borne off by a colored delegate, Rev. Edward W. S. Hammond, of the Lexington Conference. Notwithstanding the embarrassment of a manuscript, the speech produced a marvelous effect. At its close there was such a demonstration as was probably never seen in that grave and reverend body before or since. Some superstitious people even hinted that the eloquence was supernatural. Under its influence a committee was appointed to find, if possible, a suitable candidate for the office of bishop who was "of African descent." But at this point the movement stopped. Even the colored delegates them-

selves confessed that they had no man among them who had reached so high a grade. A minority report was also brought in from the Committee on Episcopacy, opposing the election of any more bishops at that session. Among other signatures to this document was that of Clinton B. Fisk, than whom the Negro never had a truer friend.

The final result—for that session—was the indefinite postponement of the whole subject, which was moved by John Lanahan, and carried by a vote of 228 yeas against 137 nays. But in a sense it was a triumph for the Negro after all. No white man ever won such an ovation or such a vote by a twenty-minute speech on the General Conference floor.

At the session of 1896 another series of events occurred, which showed that the Church was not unmindful of its colored members, and that in the matter of official station they were to be treated on the basis of "the most favored nation." Even the much deplored "caste" distinction sometimes works in their favor, and the fact that in the south "the blacks are becoming blacker and the whites whiter," is manifestly to the honor and advantages of both races.

It has been recorded that at the Conference of 1880 no colored man could be found who, even in the estimation of his own people, was qualified for the office of bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, though there were many who could fill the episcopal chair in either of the colored Communions. That fact was accepted by the Negroes, not as a discouragement, but as a call for further patience and larger mental growth. Some kinds of bishops can be raised in a short season; but *this kind* requires a longer time.

At length, after sixteen years, at the General Conference of 1896 the long looked-for colored candidate for bishop appeared, in the person of Rev. John W. E. Bowen, formerly field agent of the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society. At the time of his election to the General Conference as a delegate from the Washington (colored) Conference, he held the chair of Historic Theology in the Gammon Theological Seminary, at Atlanta, Georgia. He is a full-blooded Negro, was a graduate of the New Orleans University (colored), and of the Boston School of Theology (cosmopolitan).

His fitness for the highest office in the gift of the Church was conceded, and on the first ballot for bishops he led the poll, having received 145 votes. The next highest number was 141. On the second ballot his vote rose to 175. But who could successfully contend with McCabe and Cranston? Such a vote, with such competitors on his first appearance as a candidate, was an honor, for which this patient and faithful race did well to wait from 1880 to 1896.

But it was not all waiting. Winning was also decreed for them.

On the promotion of Secretary Hartzell to the chair of Missionary Bishop for Africa, the Rev. Madison C. B. Mason, a colored man, field agent of the Freedmen's Aid Society, was advanced to the position of secretary. All this was glory enough for one session of the Great Council. Henceforth the doors of all high places in the Church are understood to be on the latch to whatever man, of whatever race, shall prove himself able to swing them open.

Thus the policy of the General Conference appears to be successful. "Wisdom is justified of her children." To Negroes, *as such*, God seems to have said, as he said to Jacob ages ago, "I will bless him that blesseth you, and curse him that curseth you." In the light of history, both ancient and modern, the Church does well to say, We will not join together what God has put asunder.

A NEW NAME AND A NEW DEPARTURE FOR THE FREEDMEN'S AID SOCIETY.

With a brief account of the new departure of this right arm of the Church in the South, a portion of which must be retrospective, this chapter may appropriately close.

In the report of the Freedmen's Aid Society to the General Conference of 1880, signed by Bishop I. W. Wiley, President, and J. M. Walden, Secretary, the following statement occurs:

> "One of the schools for white pupils in the South, in an embarrassed condition having sought aid in vain from other institutions of the Church, appealed to the Freedmen's Aid Society for relief; and, to protect it from the sheriff, our society paid the debt and saved the school."

At once the question arose: By what authority doest thou these things? To which the secretary of the Board of Managers, John M. Walden, replied by citing a phrase in the Constitution of the Society, as he himself had drawn it up, and as the General Conference of 1872 had adopted it. The presence of two words—"and others"—in Article II of this Constitution, which phrase had generally been understood as referring to colored people who had never been in slavery, was, by Dr. Walden, declared to signify white people in the south, who might be in need of similar "aid" to that required by freedmen. The first two articles in the above-mentioned Constitution are as follows:

"Art. I. This organization shall be known as the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Art. II. Its object shall be to labor for the relief and education of Freedmen and others, especially in co-operation with the Missionary and Church Extension Societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church." (Report of Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society 1894, page 37.)

On the 20th of May the Committee on the Freedmen's Aid Society brought in a report in which the following recommendations occur:

"Your Committee on Freedmen's Aid and Southern Work respectfully report:

"1. That, in its judgment, the present organization of the Freedmen's Aid Society should remain unchanged.

"2. That under the phrase, "and others," of Article II of the Constitution of the Freedmen's Aid Society we see the way clear to aid the schools which have been established by our Church in the southern states among the white people; and hereby ask the General Conference to recommend to the Board of Managers of this society to give such aid to these schools during the next quadrennium as can be done without embarrassment to the schools among the Freedmen. (Signed,) J. P. Newman, Chairman." (Journal 1880, page 293.)

The debate over this proposed new departure of the Society was as able as it was important. After a brief statement by Dr. Newman, a substitute for the second clause in the above report was moved by Rev. J. F. Spence, of the Holston Conference, president of the East Tennessee Wesleyan University (white) at Athens, Tenn. This substitute proposed: first, to

place the colored and white work of the Society "on a similar basis;" second, to set forth this fact in all the Churches where collections were taken; and, third, to direct the Board of Managers of the Society to disburse twenty-five per cent of all moneys thus raised in aiding white Methodist Episcopal schools in the South. Although this substitute was laid on the table, it is of interest as showing the extent to which that class of white Methodists in the South under our jurisdiction expected to profit by the funds of this Society, under the new interpretation of Article II.

The debate over this proposed new departure was as able as it was important. Dr. Spence, in a lengthy speech, assumed that, in view of the phrase, "and others," in the Constitution, which was then for the first time heard of on the General Conference floor, or in any other public place, the whites of the south had actually been wronged out of their just dues. He deprecated the "class" idea in the policy of the Society, which discriminated against white schools, and in favor of colored schools. There were 19 colored schools, with 2,510 students under the care of the Society, on which it had expended about a million of dollars. In the same territory there were 11 white schools, with 1,400 students, to which the Society had given nothing. Against this favoritism his people had said little. But now he wished to know whether this systematic "class distinction" was to be perpetual. Could the white schools be recognized and aided by this Society, or could they not?

This assumption of the existence of a long-neglected claim against the Freedmen's Aid Society in favor of the white schools in the South, from which Negro pupils were rigidly excluded, produced no small resentment; and Rev. John Lanahan, already one of the veteran members of the House, after a sharp denial of the claim, moved to lay the Spence substitute on the table, which was done.

The question then recurred on the adoption of the report of the committee. The first speaker in opposition to the report was the Rev. H. W. Key, a colored delegate from the Tennessee Conference, who said, among other things:

"I have no objection to the education of white people in

the South, but I do not wish to have it done at our expense." The applause called out by this remark showed the prevailing temper of the body.

Dr. Curry followed with a strong speech against the report, concluding with these words:

> "To collect funds for the Freedmen, and then to give equally of these moneys to the whites, is a misappropriation of trust funds."

He was followed by that staunch and generous friend of the freedmen, Amos Shinkle, who, on behalf of the Board of Management, stated that the Society was in debt and had no funds available for the new work proposed.

But Dr. Walden took up the cause of the whites. He gave a history of the way in which the phrase "and others" came to have place in Article II of the Constitution of the Society; he having been a member of the Committee by which it was drafted. Indeed, as afterwards transpired, the document was written by his own hand. He affirmed that the phrase in question was inserted with special reference to possible future work of the Society among the white people of the south. He did not believe, as had been suggested, that the knowledge of this proposed new feature in the mission of the Freedmen's Aid Society would lessen, but rather increase the collections for its support. In his business-like and "carrying" way he gave a broader view of the duty of northern Methodism to its co-religionists in the south than that which was suggested by the name of the Society, and, on a plane of "Malice towards none and charity for all," urged the adoption of the report.

This speech settled the question. The report was adopted without a call for the yeas and nays, and even without a count vote.

That this measure was in advance of the sentiment of the Church no one can reasonably doubt. But it was a compromise. In order to save the rivalry incident to the presence of two Southern Aid Societies pressing their claims throughout the Connection, as well as in view of the fact that moneys were sometimes received by the Freedmen's Aid Society, specially designated "For the aid of the southern whites,"

this change was reluctantly made. There were many who feared that this division of the funds would lessen the income of the Society; but Secretary Walden predicted the opposite effect. And the event, in part, justified his prediction.

At the Conference of 1888 the name of the Society was changed to conform to the change in its proceedings, and became "The Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society."

In the Discipline put forth by the General Conference of 1896, paragraph 403 is as follows:

"The work of the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society shall be the establishment and maintenance of institutions for Christian education in the southern states among both colored and white people."

Thus the "equal recognition" demanded at the session of 1880 has been obtained, but the "color line" has not been effaced. "Caste" is still the unwritten law in the Southern section of the Methodist Episcopal Church and in the local administration of its chief official representative.

But "caste" is a different word since it came to be complained of by southern whites as against southern Negro schools. To be despised by white people was nothing new to the people of color. They had been accustomed to it. But to be envied by white people!—that was indeed startling. To be robbed by the superior race was quite a matter of course. They had always been accustomed to that. But to be envied by white men! To have white delegates come to the General Conference, and make public complaint that Negro schools were treated as a superior "class!" This was startling, indeed. The tables had been turned. It was the Negro race who, in diplomatic phrase, was treated as "the most favored nation."

In this connection it is especially to be noticed that, although the General Conference has followed the providential trend of events in its training and use of colored ministers, it has never placed a bar in the way of their advancement to any office or honor in the gift or service of the Church. It has, as above set forth, given them easier access to such positions "on account of race, color, and previous condition of servitude."

Again, while the General Conference has not attempted to

regulate the local affairs of Churches and schools so as to require the admission of both white and colored persons into all the institutions under its control, on the other hand it has never passed an act or made a regulation by which any person is excluded from any Church or school on account of race, color, or previous condition. That such exclusions have been made can not be reckoned as an unmixed evil. The African race in America has had the instinct of separation. The vast majority thereof have preferred to worship and study in churches and schools of their own; and in both of these the Negro has given the best account of himself.

The division of money by the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society between the two classes of its beneficiaries has been about in the proportion of four to one in favor of the original claimants. The following figures from the latest report of the Society will show, in part, the extent and the direction of its success. They are, for the year ending June 30, 1894:

"Membership of Methodist Episcopal Church in the sixteen southern states and District of Columbia:

White	292,466
Colored	254,937
Total	547,403
Church property in above:	
Whites	$11,119,344
Colored	3,697,300
Total	$14,816,644
School property in above:	
Whites	$1,514,487
Colored	1,491,000
Total	$3,005,487"

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONSTITUTION.

THE history of Methodist legislation, so far as the organic structure of the Church is concerned, has nowhere been given in complete, compact, and accessible form. To supply this important requisite, the following chapter has been compiled:

DEFINITIONS.

The commonly-accepted definition of the word "Constitution" is, "A written form of organic law." In view of the absence of anything in the Methodist Episcopal Church which would answer to this description, three peculiar definitions of the term have come into use.

I. The first of these occurs in the first London edition of the Minutes of the American Conference or Convention of 1784. In place of a proper title page, the following note appears at the top of the first reading page:

"The General Minutes of the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, forming the Constitution of the said Church." (Nutter's reprint of Minutes of 1784, p. 1.)

A similar use of the word is found in the heading of Section III of a later edition of the same book, which reads: "On the Nature and Constitution of our Church." The section thus named treats of the departure of the American Methodists from the Church of England, and announces the formation of an "independent Church," "with an episcopal form of government, etc." (Nutter's third edition of Minutes of Christmas Conference, p. 5.)

In like manner Sherman, in his History of the Discipline, uses the word as equivalent to the whole product of formative legislation, thus:

"The Discipline provided in 1784 was designed to serve as a Constitution, to be supplemented by such statutory provisions from time to time as the Conference might find necessary. In this irregular way the Church continued to legislate until the establishment of the General Conference in 1792." ("History of Discipline," page 27.)

In early times the Church had little use for organic forms. The preachers organized classes and societies, and the bishops organized district and annual conferences. These were the efficient and sufficient forms under which the great evangelistic movement went on.

II. The second Methodist definition of the word "Constitution" signifies a certain set of "regulations," so called, which were passed at the General Conference of 1808. The Journal of that session for May 10th contains provision for a delegated General Conference; and in view of the modified form and order of government thus ordained, six "shall nots" were added, with a proviso for doing what was therein forbidden. Though quoted in a previous chapter, the following minutes are repeated here:

"Bishop Asbury having called for the mind of the Conference whether any farther regulation in the order of General Conference be necessary, the question was put and carried in the affirmative. . . .

"Moved by Stephen G. Roszel, and seconded by William Burke, that a committee be appointed to draw up such regulations as they think best, to regulate the General Conference, and report the same to this Conference. Carried." (Journal of General Conference of 1808, page 78, May 10th.)

After a time it came to be the custom to speak of the six "Restrictive Rules," so called, as the "Constitution of the General Conference." This was done for convenience, and, perhaps, also for the reason that there was nothing else in the Methodist organization to which that dignified term could properly be applied. This application of the term seems to be intended in the Preface to the treatise on "Ecclesiastical Law," by Bishop Harris and Judge Henry. (See page 5.) Until within a few years this was almost the only sense in which the word "Constitution" was used. The Church at large did not seem to know that Episcopal Methodism had any Constitution, and only in General Conference debates was the term likely to be heard. It seems that at the date when the above-mentioned treatise appeared—*i. e.*, in the year 1878—there was in the Church at large no considerable thought of any form of organic law. If those eminent Methodist jurists, Harris and Henry, had suspected that so much use would

be made of the word "Constitution" in the legislation or administration of the Church, they would, doubtless, have given, somewhere in that exhaustive volume, a chapter, or at least a page, devoted to an exact definition of this basal term. But no such chapter or page, or even paragraph, appears.

So, also, in the painstaking work of Dr. Sherman, entitled, "The History of the Discipline," etc., first published in 1874, the word "Constitution" appears only incidentally in the first sense already indicated, while in the copious index of that admirable work the word does not appear at all. Thus the merit of freshness must certainly be accredited to any other use of that term.

III. This suggests the third use of the word "Constitution" by a school of Methodist jurists, who, under repeated sanction, and even direction, of successive General Conferences have been attempting to furnish the Church with a voluminous basis of "organic law."

Any exact definition of such an outcome of Churchly spirit and legal lore would be impossible. That it can not be a Constitution is evident, since "Constitution" signifies organic law, and this thing, being an after-thought, can never be "organic." Besides, a Constitution is a written body of structural materials;* but in the structural era of the Methodist Church no such body of organic matter was ever written. Hence it can not be a "Constitution."

Nevertheless, the records of recent General Conferences abound with phrases in which the word "Constitution" is used, in a sense, different from either of the two already noticed, hence the need of the nearest possible approach to a definition according to this new use of the term. Perhaps the following may serve the purpose:

"Definition 3. The Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church comprises all those legal and proper acts of legislation by which the Church has come to be constituted as it now is."

With this brief outline of the whole situation under review, attention will now be called to a chronological record of the legislation of the Church by distinctive eras, in which

*See Cooley's "Principles of Constitutional Law," as quoted by Judge Sibley in his treatise entitled, "The Organic Law of the Methodist Episcopal Church," page 11.

structural material and "organic law" can be found. The distinction between the two "Constitutions" just quoted, the one included in the other, will not be followed. So far as legislation, either organic or statutory, is concerned, the Church is the General Conference, and the General Conference is the Church. The distinction alluded to seems likely to increase the confusion already existing in Methodist minds in relation to this important subject.

THE WESLEYAN ERA OF THE CHURCH.

In its largest and highest sense, the word "Church" may properly be used to designate that distinct class or body of true Christian believers whose beginnings in the British colonies of North America in the year 1766 suggest the familiar names of Robert Strawbridge, Philip Embury, Barbara Heck, and Captain Webb.

The names of these good people were, doubtless, written in heaven; and devout Methodists have not been wanting who believed the same to be also true of the form and order of their Church. No longer ago than 1868 a memorial containing this distinct idea was presented to the General Conference at Chicago: the heavenly origin of "our beloved Methodism" being alleged as an argument against lay delegation.

But heavenly inspirations come through mortal minds, the mortal mind in this case being that of John Wesley. He was the Moses of the early Methodist Israel. He made all the Rules, both General and Special, and his followers believed in him as a veritable prophet of God. And such he was. Those who think they find the secret of his success in his genius for government are mistaken. It was the supernatural element in the Methodist movement which gave Wesley his autocratic power. "Genius" is shortlived; and in the later portion of his life Wesley's "genius" failed him, first in America, and then in Britain; but while he lived, and since his death, the divineness of his mission and of the power by which he fulfilled it placed him in the foremost rank of men.

The Wesleyan Era of American Methodism began with Rankin, and ended with the Christmas Conference. When Asbury refused to be made and consecrated general superin-

tendent for America without the authority of the Conference, the *power* of Wesley came to an end. His *influence* will never die.

But even in the Wesleyan era of the Church the first materials for a Constitution are to be found. In the brief record of the first assembly of the American preachers, held in the city of Philadelphia, in the year 1773, beginning on the 14th of July, the following piece of possible "organic law" appears:

"Ought not the authority of Mr. Wesley and that (English) Conference to extend to the preachers and people in America?

"*Answer.* Yes.

"Ought not the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists as contained in the Minutes (of the London Conference) to be the sole rule of our conduct who labor in the Connection with Mr. Wesley in America?

"*Answer.* Yes."

Thus the first specimens of "organic law" in American Methodism may be formulated thus:

Article I—John Wesley.

Article II—The London Minutes.

Perhaps only one of these articles is needful, since Wesley was himself the entire sum and substance of the Minutes aforesaid. But then it must be remembered that every one of the ten preachers present at that first Methodist Conference on this continent was both a loyal subject of John Wesley and of King George.

Another piece of structural material is found in the Minutes of the regular annual conference of 1784, held in the months of April and May. It appears that some irregular Methodist preachers had come out to the American colonies, and it had become needful to make a rule in regard to them. Hence the following question and answer, which shows the true sense and basis of that phrase which has so long stood in the Discipline, viz., "Our present existing and established standards of doctrine."

"*Ques.* 21. How shall we conduct ourselves towards European preachers?

"*Ans.* If they are recommended by Mr. Wesley, will be subject to the American Conference, preach the doctrine taught in the four

volumes of sermons and 'Notes on the New Testament,' keep the circuits they are appointed to, follow the directions of the London and American Minutes, and be subject to Francis Asbury as general assistant while he stands approved by Mr. Wesley and the Conference, we will receive them; but if they walk contrary to the above directions, no ancient right or appointment shall prevent their being excluded from our Connection." (Minutes for 1784.)

Thus the four volumes of Wesley's Sermons and his "Notes on the New Testament" appear as Methodist "standards of doctrine."

THE SECOND, OR CONFERENCE, ERA OF THE CHURCH.

At the first Methodist Conference—*i. e.*, that of 1773—there were ten preachers present, this being the entire force of itinerant ministers at that time in America. In 1784 the number had increased to eighty-one, though only sixty were present at the Christmas Convention. They were all accounted as belonging to the Conference, though, after the last-mentioned date, they doubtless never all assembled at one time and place.

Now having a nation of their own, they were also to have a Church of their own. The form of this Church was modeled by Mr. Wesley as nearly after the pattern of the Church of England as the circumstances of the case admitted, with himself in place of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a regular clergy in the best "apostolic succession" at that time possible. Wesley has done well by his spiritual subjects in the New World, and he expects them to do well by him.

But the calling of a conference for legislating on what he had himself determined and announced was no part of his plan. That organizing and governing convention introduced a new Methodist era.

At the outset of this "General Conference," as Lee calls it, or this "Convention," as Asbury describes it, the dominating human influence was that of the great arch-Methodist across the sea. This was as he would have had it. This was like the London Conference: to advise, possibly, but certainly not to govern. Yet in its very first action this "body of ministers and preachers," as Lee describes it, began to show a revolutionary spirit.

"At this Conference," says Lee, "we formed ourselves into a regular Church by the name of 'The Methodist Episcopal Church,' making, at the same time, the episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent amenable to the body of ministers and preachers." (Short History of the Methodists, p. 94.) "The advice of Mr. Wesley" is elsewhere cited as a reason for organizing a Church with the episcopal form of government. But "advice" was not the word which expressed Wesley's idea of his relation to American Methodism. He had "appointed" Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as his representatives in the new Church, and he expected them to rule in his name.

But what has happened?

Here is the official record of the doings of that organizing convention; and on its title page there is no mention of the name of John Wesley. The form is as follows:

Minutes of Several Conversations between The Rev. Thomas Coke, LL. D., The Rev. Francis Asbury, and others, at a Conference, begun in Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, on Monday, the 27th. of December, in the year 1784. Composing a Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers and other Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Philadelphia: Printed by Charles Cist, in Arch-Street, the Corner of Fourth-Street. M,DCC,LXXXV.

Why this change? In the published Minutes of all the preceding Conferences the title page used to read: "Minutes of some conversations between the preachers in connection with the Rev. Mr. John Wesley" (etc., as to time and place). (See volume of Conference Minutes, 1773-1828, Vol. I, published by T. Mason and G. Lane. New York, 1840.) But here is no mention even of the name of the great chief.

Has there been a revolution?

Exactly so. The Conference, which began in acknowledged subjection to Wesley, ended as an independent body, the sole representative of a Christian Church in full New Testament force and form. The new era was introduced when Francis

Asbury, not satisfied with the authority of Wesley alone, referred the question of his own superintendency and consecration to the vote of the Conference.

To this view it has been objected that Mr. Wesley specially declared, concerning "those poor sheep in the wilderness:" "They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church." (See Wesley's letter "To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America," in the Conference Minutes, Vol. I.) But the evident answer is furnished by the context of the words of Wesley above quoted. It was "the English hierarchy" from whose authority they were "disentangled," but not by any means from the authority of John Wesley. This his subsequent attempts to control the American Conference abundantly prove. The king did not abdicate. He only dictated a charter by which the American Methodists might govern themselves, except in so far as he, by himself or by his viceroys, might wish to govern them.

Another objection has been found in the following passage, contained in the Form of Discipline, put forth by the Convention of 1784:

"*Ques.* 2. What can be done in order to the future unity of the Methodists?

"*Ans.* During the life of Mr. Wesley we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to Church government to obey his commands. And we do engage after his death to do everything that we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America and the political interests of these states, to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe."

This profession of filial subjection to Mr. Wesley must have been adopted at the instance of Dr. Coke. Asbury declares that he never approved of it, and there was no one else in the Convention likely to move such a minute. From the first it was a dead letter, and three years later it was expunged.

It is true that Wesley's name was subsequently restored to a place in the American Minutes. It is also true that, to relieve the mind of their venerable and honored friend, the Conference of 1789 added a new question to the Discipline, the answer whereto stated that John Wesley, Thomas Coke,

and Francis Asbury exercised episcopal authority in the Methodist Church in Europe and America. At this Wesley was more incensed than before. But it is plain that Wesley's episcopate in America after 1784 was merely honorary and nominal. His authority had come to an end.

The question now arises: What became of the power of Mr. Wesley over the Methodists in America? Into whose hands did it fall?

This question might, in part, be answered by another, viz.: What became of the power of George III over the colonists in America? Into whose hands did it fall? The cases were similar. At this juncture of affairs State politics and Church politics march along the same lines. The royal prerogatives of the king passed to the Continental Congress. In like manner, a few months later, the plenary powers of the Wesleyan autocracy passed to "the body of ministers and preachers." (Lee's Short History, p. 94, ¶ 3.)

The phrase made use of by Lee, and quoted above—viz., "the body of ministers and preachers"—is important, as being a definition of that other phrase, "the General Conference." Beyond question, the "General Conference," as distinguished from the annual conferences, was, at that time, commonly understood to consist of all the itinerant ministry. On this definition the force of certain "Constitutional" actions of that Conference depends.

In later times two divergent views of this subject have been held by the two great sections of the Church. In the Methodist Episcopal Church the consensus of opinion is as above stated. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the episcopate is held to be of co-ordinate authority with the General Conference. The following explanatory remark was made by one of the best authorities on this question in either section of the Church: "All members of our General Conference believe in the plenary power of the Conference until they become bishops, and then they take the southern view."

So far as Asbury is concerned, the co-ordinate authority of the episcopate and the General Conference is untenable. By

his refusal to be ordained and made general superintendent on Wesley's sole authority, he placed the very existence of his bishopric at the will of the "body of ministers and preachers." He thus established a precedent which was shortly enacted into the organic law of the Church, where the doctrine of the power of the General Conference to make and unmake bishops, and to keep them under constant control, has stood from that day to this.

Even Dr. Coke, who was only a Wesleyan bishop, adds force, by contrast, to the doctrine above stated. His acts, as seen in a previous chapter, were repeatedly challenged, and when at length he entreated his American brethren to accept his full episcopal service, it was the vote of the General Conference of 1796 which saved him the loss of his episcopate; for nowhere except in America was he ever a bishop at all. Thus, substantially, his official position came to be the same as that of Bishop Asbury.

The idea of establishing a "Constitution" for their new Church seems never to have entered the minds of the sixty members of the Christmas Convention. There is not even a record of a formal adoption of its name. In answer to Question 3 in the brief Minutes of that session it is said:

> "We will form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, under the direction of superintendents, elders, deacons, and helpers, according to the Forms of Ordination annexed to our Liturgy and the Form of Discipline set forth in these Minutes."

The name "Methodist Episcopal Church," which should have stood as the first Article in a regular written Constitution, does not occur in the Minutes at all, except upon the title page of the little volume. There is a tradition that this name was suggested by John Dickins; and it seems to have been adopted just as it has been retained—*i. e.*, by universal consent.

At this point a brief retrospect brings to view the following materials as having entered into the structure of the new Church established, according to the advice of Mr. Wesley, by the Christmas Conference or Convention of 1784. The itemized form in common use for Constitutions, and already

adopted in respect to the Wesleyan era, may still be followed. Thus:

ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION.

"The United Societies of Methodists in America do now form themselves into an independent Church. This action is taken by 'the body of ministers and preachers' assembled in Conference, in the city of Baltimore, in the state of Maryland, begun on the 27th day of December, 1784." (See Annual Minutes, Volume I, republished in 1840, page 22, ¶ 7.)

ARTICLE II. NAME.

"The name of this organization shall be The Methodist Episcopal Church in America." (See Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," page 94; also page 181, Minutes for 1785.)

ARTICLE III. FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

"This Church shall have an Episcopal form of government." (See Lee, page 96, Minutes for 1785.)

ARTICLE IV. MINISTRY.

"The ministry of this Church consists of general superintendents, elders, deacons, and assistants." (See Annual Minutes of Conference or Convention of 1784, republished, Volume I, page 22, questions 1, 2, 3, 4.)

ARTICLE V. STANDARDS OF DOCTRINE.

"The standards of doctrine of this Church are Wesley's Four Volumes of Sermons and his 'Notes on the New Testament.'" (See Annual Minutes, republished, Volume I, page 21, question 21.)

ARTICLE VI. THE CONFERENCE.

"'The body of ministers and preachers' of this Church, when assembled for that purpose, shall constitute a Conference wherein the supreme governing and legislative power of the Church is vested." (See Annual Minutes of 1784, republished, page 22, paragraph 7.)

ARTICLE VII. THE EPISCOPATE.

"The episcopate of this Church is elective by, and amenable to, the Conference of 'the body of ministers and preachers.'" (Ibid.)

Whatever forms of words may be used to designate them, these five structural elements were unquestionably built into the foundation of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the first Constituting Convention, or Conference, opened in the city of Baltimore in the year 1784.

The work of the second formative Conference—namely, that of 1792—will be considered in its historic order.

To the above constituent materials laid in the foundations of this Church some authorities add the Articles of Religion and the General Rules of the United Societies. These collections of doctrinal tenets and moral precepts, compiled from the Prayer Book, or drawn up by Mr. Wesley, were sometimes printed in the Minutes of early American Conferences; but they certainly were not organic to the Methodist Episcopal Church. That Church would have been all that it was, or was intended to be, without them. In maintenance of the view here disallowed it is said that, in the opinion of the General Conference of 1808, the Articles of Religion and the General Rules must have been fundamental, since they were both included among the things which future General Conferences were forbidden to alter or do away.

To this it is replied that the estimation in which any tenet or rule might be held by the Conference of 1808 could not affect its historic status. If it was not organic, if it was not comprised in the primary structure of the Church, no amount of respect or protection could lift it into the position of organic law.

Following the remark of Asbury concerning the character of the Christmas Assembly of 1784, Sherman, in his History of the Discipline, holds the following language:

> "The Christmas Conference was a General Conference, as it embodied the entire ministry; but irregular, as it did not become a part of the economy of the Church, by assembling at stated periods in the future. It was a Convention assembled for the purpose of organizing the Church, and establishing a Constitution for the government of the body, without any expectation of its recurrence." (History of Discipline, page 27.)

The Conference of 1787 has sometimes been spoken of as a General Conference. It was ordered by Mr. Wesley as such,

and Dr. Coke came over to hold it. Wesley also ordered the election and consecration of Richard Whatcoat as general superintendent, with the view, as was supposed, of recalling Asbury to England. The refusal of the "body of ministers and preachers" to obey either of these commandments shows the completeness of the revolution that had taken place in Methodist America. Only the usual annual conference for that year was held, and Whatcoat was not made general superintendent. Mr. Wesley was still loved and honored, but his authority had been assumed by the Conference.

There was a prevailing impression in the Church that another General Assembly of "the whole body of ministers and preachers" would be held for the purpose of completing the work of organizing the Church. The convention of 1784 had only made a definite beginning, and further "organic law" was evidently required. On this subject Lee speaks, in reference to the General Conference of 1792, as follows:

"The preachers generally thought that, in all probability, there would never be another Conference of the kind at which all the preachers in the Connection might attend. It was generally thought this Conference would adopt some permanent regulations which would prevent the preachers in future from coming together. This persuasion brought out more of the preachers than otherwise would have attended." (Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," p. 177.)

This is important, as bringing out two facts: First, the Conference of 1792 was expected to amend and further perfect the Constitution of 1784; second, it is incidentally shown that it was by no means the custom for all the preachers to go to Conference. Probably the sixty out of a total of eighty-one, who attended the General Conference or Convention of 1784, was a larger proportionate attendance than usual on Conference occasions.

On this subject, after mentioning the suggestion of a council, which plan, he says, "fell dead at its birth," Sherman continues thus:

"The only other eligible plan seemed to be to call the whole body of traveling preachers together at stated intervals, to consider and settle the business of the Connection. This was the first question of the hour. To settle it, a large part of the traveling preachers had convened and united, as a means of attaining this end, in the

adoption of the General Conference, to be held quadrennially,* and to be composed of all the traveling preachers." (History of Discipline, page 30.)

On the authority of the testimony above quoted from Lee and Sherman, to which might be added that of Stevens, who speaks to the same effect, the General Conference of 1792 is commonly held to have been a sort of annex or supplement to the Convention of 1784.

Following the consensus of early opinion on this subject, the substance of the organizing acts of the Conference may properly be classed as Constitutional Amendments.

The Church established by the Convention of 1784 being an Episcopal Church, the office of bishop therein appeared to require special safeguards. Hence the presence in the Discipline of 1792 of the new section numbered IV. This section so well illustrates the sense of its own powers, as held by the Supreme Legislature of the Church, that it is here reproduced entire:

"*Ques.* 1. How is a bishop to be constituted in future?

"*Ans.* By the election of the General Conference, and the laying on of the hands of three bishops, or at least of one bishop and two elders.

"*Ques.* 2. If by death, expulsion, or otherwise, there be no bishop remaining in our Church, what shall we do?

"*Ans.* The General Conference shall elect a bishop; and the elders, or any three of them, that shall be appointed by the General Conference for that purpose, shall ordain him according to our office of ordination.

"*Ques* 3. What is the bishop's duty?

"*Ans.* 1. To preside in our conferences.

"2. To fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits.

"3. In the intervals of the conferences, to change, receive, or suspend preachers, as necessity may require.

"4. To travel through the Connection at large.

"5. To oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the societies.

"6. To ordain bishops, elders, and deacons.

*Although the General Conference of 1792 "determined to have another General Conference at the end of four years," as stated by Lee ("Short History," p. 181, ¶ 4), no rule was passed making the four years' term a stated period for the recurrence of the session. Like much else which has come to be the recognized and authoritative government of the Church, the quadrennial feature of its supreme legislature was, in part, a growth.

"*Ques.* 4. To whom is the bishop amenable for his conduct?

"*Ans.* To the General Conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary.

"*Ques.* 5. What provision shall be made for the trial of an immoral bishop, in the interval of the General Conference?

"*Ans.* If a bishop be guilty of immorality, three traveling elders shall call upon him, and examine him on the subject: and if the three elders verily believe that the bishop is guilty of the crime, they shall call to their aid two presiding elders from two districts in the neighborhood of that where the crime was committed, each of which presiding elders shall bring with him two elders, or an elder and a deacon. The above mentioned nine persons shall form a conference, to examine into the charge brought against the bishop: and if two-thirds of them verily believe him to be guilty of the crime laid to his charge, they shall have authority to suspend the bishop till the ensuing General Conference, and the districts shall be regulated in the meantime as is provided in the case of the death of a bishop.

"*Ques.* 6. If the bishop cease from traveling at large among the people, shall he still exercise his office among us in any degree?

"*Ans.* If he cease from traveling without the consent of the General Conference, he shall not thereafter exercise any ministerial function whatsoever in our Church.

"N. B.—The bishop has obtained liberty, by the suffrages of the Conference, to ordain local preachers to the office of deacons provided they obtain a testimonial from the society to which they belong, and from the stewards of the circuit, signed also by three elders, three deacons, and three traveling preachers."

The following amendments, tabulated as in supplied form of Constitution of 1784, were made (for substance) by the General Conference of 1792:

Amendment I—Amending Article VI of 1784.

"The General Conference shall consist of all the traveling preachers who shall be in full connection (in an annual conference) at the time of holding the Conference.

Amendment II—Additional to Same Article.

"All the traveling preachers of the district, or districts, respectively, are members of the district (annual) conferences.

Article III—Amending Article VI of 1784.

"It shall take two-thirds of all the members of the General Conference to make any new rule, or abolish an old one. But a majority may alter or amend any rule.

Amendment IV—The District, or Annual, Conference.

"For convenience of administration, the ministers and preachers are organized into district conferences to be held annually. To these bodies the members thereof are severally amenable for their conduct." (See Section III, Discipline of 1792, page 15, questions 3 and 4.)

This last article is quoted by Sherman from the Minutes of the General Conference of 1792. (History of Discipline, p. 30.) All the other formulated and numbered articles, as will have been seen, are mere condensations or paraphrases of the acts of the two formative General Assemblies of the "body of ministers and preachers."

Special attention is due to the last number of the series above cited. What more complete authority can be imagined than that which the General Conference of 1792 assumes to itself? "Any new rule." There are no exceptions. In a two-thirds' majority of the Supreme Methodist Legislature the ultimate, absolute, unlimited government of the Church is claimed to reside.

Here, too, may be found the origin of that well-established basis of Methodist common law, that "no General Conference can bind its successor." The vote of two-thirds of a General Conference was adequate to the doing of any act of legislation; but such act was of no force as against a similar vote in a subsequent session. The legislative authority of a General Conference is here supposed to begin with the close of its session, and continue until the close of the next quadrennial session. Thus it is possible for each General Conference to order the manner of choosing the delegates who are to constitute the next succeeding Assembly; but if that next session desires to do so, it can expunge any rule made by its predecessor by a two-thirds vote. It is evident from all this that the life of any law made by a General Conference is measured by the sufferance of the succeeding General Conference or Conferences, which may see no occasion for changing or removing it. This was the only and sufficient provision for permanency which, up to this date, the "organic law" of the Methodist Episcopal Church contained.

It is fair to conclude that the Conference of 1792, which

made this rule for its own government had no idea of binding the future to the past. All doors were left open. There were as yet no class interests to be protected. The political era had not yet begun. The following quotation from the Preface of the Discipline of 1792, signed by Bishops Coke and Asbury, shows the spirit of the leading minds of the Church at that time:

> **"We think ourselves obliged frequently to view and review the whole order of our Church, always aiming at perfection, standing on the shoulders of those who have lived before us, and taking the advantage of our former selves."**

With the Conference of 1792 the Constitution-making period closed. These foundation-builders, many of whom were Englishmen, had no fancy for Constitutional fetters or Church decretals. From that time forward, until 1808, nothing was heard of "Constitution" or Constitutional Conventions. The Church now had anchors enough. What she required was sails.

The rapid increase in the membership and ministry of the new body soon made the General Conference unwieldy. Besides, the area of the Church soon became so wide that the assembly of "the body of ministers and preachers" was next to impossible. Therefore, acting on its rights, as established by the Constitution of 1792 (formulated and numbered above as Article VI), the General Conference of 1800 again changed the composition of that body, by enacting that the Supreme Legislature of the Church should be composed of those full members of annual conferences only "who had traveled four years."

This second limitation was accepted without protest, though the junior preachers thereby excluded were not consulted. Here, then, is still further evidence that the General Conference was admitted on all hands to have full power over the form and manner of its own existence, as well as over the form and manner of the existence of other departments of the Church.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONSTITUTION (CONTINUED).

SECTION III IN THE DISCIPLINE OF 1808, SO FAR AS IT RELATES TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

THE General Conference of 1808 has by many been held to mark the opening of a new constitutional era in the Church. Hence arises definition 3 of the word "constitution," as given at the outset of Chapter IX; viz., "The Six Restrictive Rules," with the proviso for their suspension or modification.

The limits of this chapter do not admit of a full review of the controversy which has of late arisen over this definition and the questions involved in it. The utmost that can be done will be to point out the controlling historic facts involved in the case, and to suggest, in brief, the chief arguments on both sides of the question.

For the convenience of readers, the whole of Section III of the Discipline of 1808, relating to the General Conference, is here reproduced, of which "The Six Restrictive Rules," as they are usually called, form only the negative side of the section:

OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

"*Ques.* 2. Who shall compose the General Conference, and what are the regulations and powers belonging to it?

"*Ans.* 1. The General Conference shall be composed of one member for every five members of each annual conference, to be appointed either by seniority or choice, at the discretion of such annual conference: yet so that such representatives shall have traveled at least four full calendar years from the time that they were received on trial by an annual conference, and are in full connection at the time of holding the conference.

"2. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord 1812, in the city of New York, and thenceforward on the first day of May once in four years perpetually, in such place or places as shall be fixed on by the General Conference from time to time: but the general superintendents, with or by the advice of all the annual conferences, or if there be no general

superintendent, all the annual conferences respectively shall have power to call a General Conference, if they judge it necessary, at any time.

"3. At all times when the General Conference is met, it shall take two-thirds of the representatives of all the annual conferences to make a quorum for transacting business.

"4. One of the general superintendents shall preside in the General Conference; but in case no general superintendent be present, the General Conference shall choose a president *pro tempore*.

"5. The General Conference shall have full powers to make rules and regulations for our Church, under the following limitations and restrictions, viz.:

"(1) The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion, nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

"(2) They shall not allow of more than one representative for every five members of the annual conference, nor allow of a less number than one for every seven.

"(3) They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away Episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

"(4) They shall not revoke or change the general rules of the United Societies.

"(5) They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee, and of an appeal: Neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society or by a committee, and of an appeal.

"(6) They shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern, or of the Charter Fund, to any purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children: Provided, nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of all the annual conferences, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions."

In determining the value of Section III of the Discipline of 1808, so far as the question of the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church is concerned, it is proper to examine the nature and determine the powers of the body by which that section was enacted. This, for convenience, may be done in a series of numbered paragraphs, as follows:

1. The history of constitution-making shows that certain conditions are held to be essential to the valid enactment of organic law. Of those essential conditions are the following;

viz., (*a*) Time, (*b*) Previous preparation, (*c*) Class of persons composing the legislative body, (*d*) Full intention of the body in question, (*e*) Possession of adequate powers for the act performed.

2. (*a*) The constructive or organizing era of the Church had passed long before the assembling of the General Conference of 1808. The only way in which any new organic law could rightfully be enacted was by calling another Constitutional Convention. The General Conference of 1808 was not such a body, but was the regular quadrennial session of the Supreme Legislature of the Church.

(*b*) In the memorial of the New York Annual Conference, "seconded by the New England, Western, and South Carolina Annual Conferences," * it appears that the majority of the annual conferences were previously addressed on the subject of a Delegated General Conference, and some of them had voted instructions or advice to their members who should attend the approaching General Conference.

(*c*) There is no room for doubt as to the proper composition of the body in question as a regular session of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They were all presumably itinerant ministers of the Church, "who had traveled four years," according to the limitation fixed by the General Conference of 1800.

(*d*) The intention of the New York, New England, Western, and South Carolina Annual Conferences was thus expressed in their memorial to the General Conference of 1808, against which there is no record of protest:

"We therefore present unto you this memorial, requesting that you will adopt the principle of an equal representation from the annual conferences, to form in future a Delegated General Conference, and that you will establish such rules and regulations as are necessary to carry the same into effect." (Journal of General Conference of 1808, page 77, ¶ 2.)

(*e*) Under the organic law of the Church, as enacted by the Convention of 1784 and amended by the General Conference of 1792, the question arises, Were the powers of the General Conference of 1808 adequate to the valid enactment of those por-

* See Journal General Conference, 1808, p. 78, ¶ 2; also, Sherman, "History of Discipline," p. 35, ¶ 6.

tions of Section III of the Discipline of 1808 which are held to be of the nature and force of a Constitution?

The answer to this question, in the absence of any special or unusual powers possessed by that body, must turn upon the extent of the powers which it had inherited from the Convention of 1784, through succeeding General Conferences. These powers are stated in what, for convenience, has been tabulated as Amendment II, by the Conference of 1792, to the Constitution of 1784. A vote of two-thirds of all the members of the General Conference was adequate to the making of "any new rule," or "abolishing an old one," and "a majority could amend any rule."

Thus the power of the General Conference of 1808 was plenary, if exercised in accordance with what may be called natural principles and inherent or acquired rights. For there are, admittedly, certain natural and resultant rights, both individual and organic, which are superior to all legislation.

For example: In paragraph 5, of Section III, of the Discipline of 1808, the following words occur:

> "5th. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and twelve, and thenceforward on the first day of May, once in four years, perpetually," etc.

But for the provision and power contained in Amendment II, as above, such a word as "perpetually," in such connection, would be in excess of all legislative power possessed by the General Conference, and would therefore be null and void. As coming under Amendment II, the word "perpetually" is of no force for more than one succeeding General Conference. It is only a "rule," which may be amended or abolished by the next succeeding similar body to that which thereby sought in vain to attain a fixity for the date of the assembling of the Supreme Legislature of the Church.

3. In defense of Definition 2, as above, which makes Section III of the Discipline of 1808 "a new Constitution" for the Church, it has been said that, as the Delegated General Conference was to be a new body, the provisions for its establishment must be regarded as a new Constitution.

To this it is replied that, upon the identity of any General

Conference with its predecessors its constitutional status and authority must depend. If the first Delegated General Conference was not held under the Constitution of 1784 and the Amendments of 1792, as well as under Section III of the Discipline of 1808, it would not be a legitimate General Conference, and could not have any legislative or rule-making power.

Besides, if the Delegated General Conference of 1812 was to be "a new body," it was entitled to make a Constitution for itself.

4. Again, from a different standpoint it is claimed that, under what is tabulated as Amendment II, made by the General Conference of 1792, the General Conference of 1808 possessed plenary power, and therefore was competent to make a new Constitution for the Church and for its Supreme Legislative Body.

To this it is replied: Amendment II, as above, gives power to make any new "rule," or to alter, or amend, or abolish any old one. But the making of a new "rule" is quite a different matter from making a new "Constitution." The use of the word "rule" in Amendment II fixes the scope and force of the word "regulations," which is repeatedly used throughout the entire history of the rise, progress, and final enactment of Section III of the Discipline of 1808. Nowhere in that whole record does the word "Constitution" occur. If under the modest term, "rule," that precocious young genius from New Hampshire, Joshua Soule, was attempting to cover up and push through a set of enactments which were intended to rob the Supreme Legislature of a portion of its plenary power, he was guilty of an act of usurpation and schism.

If, under the authority of Amendment II as above, it be possible to make a "rule" which is strong enough to abolish an old "Constitution," and make a new one, then the organic law of the Church is at the mercy of any brilliant, alert, ambitious leader who, like Soule, could face down one General Conference and bend another to his will.

5. Again, in defense of the claims of Section III, as above, to be a "new Constitution" of the Church and of its Supreme Legislature, it is said that the members of the General Conference of 1808 are about to surrender their power to a Delegated Conference, to be composed of only one in five of "the

body of ministers and preachers;" and therefore it was their right to fix a Constitution for that new body, by which they might reserve some fractions of the plenary power of the General Conference, as such, to themselves.

To this it is replied that, except as members of an actual session of a General Conference, they possessed no legislative power at all. While the session was in progress they had nothing which they could "surrender," except their seats in the body, and that only to their proper alternate, if such alternate had been chosen. And when the session adjourned *sine die*, there was no power which, as ex-members of the dissolved House, they could possibly carry away. To contrive "a new Constitution" with the view to such an attempt, is not at all to the credit either of the sagacity or honesty of the General Conference of 1808.

6. It is further said, in the effort to lift Section III, as above, into the dignity and force of "a new Constitution," that, in the original and organic form of the General Conference the whole "body of ministers and preachers" was either actually or constructively present. But by the plan for a Delegated General Conference this was no longer possible. The sweeping reduction in ministerial legislative powers and rights amounted to a kind of revolution. A new Constitution for the new Delegated Body was therefore made.

To this it is replied: The whole "body of ministers and preachers" was to be, either actually or constructively, present in the Delegated General Conference provided for in Section III of the Discipline of 1808. Every voting member of an annual conference was present in the ensuing General Conference, either in person or by the representative of his annual conference.

7. But it is insisted, in defense of the constitutional status of "the Six Restrictive Rules," that they have been acted upon by General Conferences from 1812 down to the present time as the new Constitution of the Delegated General Conference.

To this it is replied that the six Restrictive Rules are minus quantities. They represent something proposed to be taken away from something else. No number of "They shall nots" could, in the nature of the case, possibly amount to a "Constitution."

8. What, then, is the status, so far as the question of a Constitution is concerned, of Section III in the Discipline of 1808?

Doubtless the same as the status of the provisions of the General Conference of 1792 and that of 1800, which modify the composition of the General Conference itself. The provisions of that section are constitutional amendments; nothing more, and nothing less.

The General Conference of 1808 amended the Constitution of the Church, as it had a perfect right to do. They were following the precedent set by the Conferences of 1792 and 1800. But not being endowed with constitution-making powers, in addition to their legislative functions, as a regular General Conference, they did not claim that the changes they were making were of the nature of "a new Constitution." They first spoke of them as "regulations;" and they have always since been spoken of as "rules," until a very recent date.

9. An examination of the respective provisions of that portion of Section III, etc., which concerns the General Conference, still further establishes their status as simple constitutional amendments. Thus "Answer 1" amends Article VI (as tabulated) by defining and limiting the membership of the General Conference. It thus (as tabulated) becomes Amendment IV.

Answer 2 amends Article VI (as tabulated), by fixing the date on which the quadrennial General Conference shall meet, and making provision for calling special sessions. It thus becomes Amendment V.

Answer 3 amends Article VI (as tabulated), by fixing a quorum of the body. It thus becomes Amendment VI.

Answer 4 amends Article VI (as tabulated), by fixing the presidency of the General Conference. It thus becomes Amendment VII.

Answer 5, with its six restrictions, amends Article VI, by restricting the powers of the General Conference. It thus becomes Amendment VIII.

It is held by some that Restrictive Rule No. 1 amended Article V (as tabulated) in the Constitution of 1784, by adding the Articles of Religion to, or combining them with, "our

present existing and established standards of doctrine." But it may be answered, that the use of the conjunction "nor" in the First Restrictive Rule shows that "the Articles of Religion" were not looked upon as being in the same category with "our present existing and established standards of doctrine;" i. e., Wesley's Four Volumes of Sermons and his "Notes on the New Testament." The "Articles" were mostly anti-Wesleyan; the "Standards" were Wesley himself.

The proviso for altering the six restrictions amends Article VI (as tabulated), by transferring to the annual conferences a part of the supreme governing and rule-making power which had heretofore resided in the General Conference.

10. If it be asked, What, then, became the power of the General Conference which was taken away from it by the six Restrictive Rules? the answer is: They have, by the proviso affixed to the said "rules," passed to the annual conferences. They thus became the partners of the General Conference to the extent indicated by the six Restrictive Rules. And the whole "body of ministers and preachers," which was the original source of the plenary power of the General Conference, by its membership in both annual and General Conferences, still holds and exercises the same plenary power which they originally acquired from John Wesley, and which, in 1784, they gave over to the General Conference. There is therefore no "new General Conference," and consequently no "new Constitution" for "a new General Conference." *

It thus appears that Definition 2 (as at the outset of Chapter IX), which makes the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church to consist of Section III in the Discipline of 1808, is unhistoric. It is false alike in logic and in law. Even the Constitutional Commission, whose laborious work has been rejected by two successive General Conferences, has not succeeded in finding in "the Six Restrictive Rules" a body of minus quantities large enough to make up "a new Constitution."

*Those who desire to pursue this subject still further are referred to the decision of Judge Nelson, of the Supreme Court of the United States, in the Church property case. It may be found in the *Western Christian Advocate* for 1851, page 193, column 7; or doubtless in any other Methodist Church paper of or near December 3, 1851.

CONSTITUTION ACCORDING TO DEFINITION III.

III. The third Methodist definition of the term "Constitution" has been formulated thus:

The Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church comprises all those legal and proper acts of legislation by which the Church has come to be constituted as it now is.

The Constitutional Commission which was appointed by the General Conference of 1888, for the purpose of finding (or furnishing) a Constitution for the Church, made a report to the session of 1892 at Omaha and to the session of 1896 at Cleveland, in which the following definition occurs:

> "The present Constitution of the Delegated General Conference is the document drawn up and adopted by the General Conference of 1808; but modified since that time in accordance with the specifications and restrictions of the original document (i. e., Section III of Discipline of 1808), and is now in paragraphs 55 to 64 inclusive in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 1888, excepting the statement as to the definite number of delegates provided for in paragraph 55. which is an act solely within the power of the General Conference, under the permission of the Second Restrictive Rule.
>
> "Second. The organic law of the Methodist Episcopal Church includes, and is limited to, the Articles of Religion, the General Rules of the United Societies, and that which we have already defined as 'The Constitution of the General Conference,' while the rules and regulations enacted by the General Conference are statutory, and form no part of the organic law of the Church." (Journal of General Conference of 1892, pages 393, 394.)

The thought at once suggests itself: If the mere definitions of the twofold "Constitution" proposed by the Constitutional Commission occupy nearly a whole page in a law book, and are so prolific in doubts and confusions, what must the whole dual Constitution itself be? Surely the General Conference has done well thus far, in protecting itself and the Church at large from the mass of involved material, presumably ever increasing, which this Commission seeks to impose upon the Conference and the Church as a "Constitution." *

*The final form of the dual constitution proposed by the Constitutional Commission may be found in the Journal of the General Conference of 1896, pp. 339-344.

The successive changes in the ratio of representation of the annual conferences in the General Conference may be set down as amendments to Article VI of the Constitution of 1784-5, thus:

Amendment IX. Ratio fixed by General Conference of 1808, not more than 1 in 5, and not less than 1 in 7.

Amendment X. Ratio changed by General Conference of 1836 to not more than 1 in 14, and not less than 1 in 30.

Amendment XI. Ratio again changed by General Conference of 1872 from not more than 1 in 30, nor less than 1 in 45.

ACTION OF GENERAL CONFERENCE UNDER CONSTITUTION AND AMENDMENTS.

Reference has been made in a previous chapter to the long contention of the Canadian Conference for its *pro rata* share of the property of the Book Concern, in consequence of its separation from the Parent Body in the United States. The outcome of this long controversy is an example of the ease with which even a written Constitution may be evaded under pressing exigency.

The sixth "Restrictive Rule" was the basis of the refusal of the General Conference to divide the property as aforesaid. But the session of 1836 adjusted the difficulty, by contracting to allow the Canadian brethren a large special discount for a certain length of time on the books thereafter to be purchased by them, thus merely straining the "rule," and doing substantial justice to the plaintiff in the case.

The next Constitutional contest of importance was the memorable struggle over the case of Bishop Andrew. The great debate in the General Conference of 1844, and especially the great speech of Dr. Hamline, has already been mentioned in its appropriate chapter. The doctrine of that historic argument may be said to have voiced the whole northern section of the Church. For many years the subordination of the episcopate to the General Conference was regarded as indisputable. Later developments, however, in substance, if not in form, reopened the well-settled question.

But another financial question arose out of the great storm of 1844. The Church, for the division whereof the famous "Plan of Separation" was formulated, was in fact divided by the

action of the southern conferences, and then came the second claim for a division of the property of the Book Concern.

The General Conference of 1848 declared the "Plan of Separation" null and void, as the annual conferences had nonconcurred. Resolutions were passed at this session declaring that "the General Conference has no authority to divide the Church," and falling back in the personal rights of each individual member to go or stay, regardless of Conference action. This ground was evidently taken, from the fact that the conferences on the proposed border-line of separation were by no means unanimous in favor of division.

The decision of Judge Nelson, already mentioned, held the doctrine that the General Conference had the right and power to divide the Church. The provision in "the Plan of Separation," for referring the question of division to the annual conferences, he held did not invalidate the action of the General Conference of 1844, at which the whole power of the Church was present, either personally or by representation. Hence, on the vote of the General Conference alone, regardless of the effect of the votes of northern annual conferences, Judge Nelson gave judgment for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Here appears a legal recognition of the plenary power of the General Conference, under the action of its organic law. In view of this, the Western Section of the Methodist Book Concern wisely settled their side of the case by arbitration, though a prior decision of the United States District Court had been made in their favor.

The next important change in the structure of the Church, as to its terms of membership, was that which was voted in the General Conference of 1864. The General Rule on Slavery was so changed as to make slaveholding a bar to membership. This action was referred to the annual conferences for ratification, as if the General Rules of the United Societies had been a part of the organic law of the Church. Although that body of moral precepts had not been formally adopted by the Conference or Convention of 1784, they early came to be bound up along with the annual editions of the Discipline. In this way they gradually attained to a conceded authority, and by precedent only were allowed to have the force of law.

"The change in the General Rule," as the phrase commonly ran, was carried. But it can not be tabulated as an amendment to the Constitution, since it was not the Constitution, but only the "General Rule" which was amended.

Even the organic change adopted by the General Conference of 1868, sent down to the annual conferences, and ratified by the General Conference of 1872, was simply an amendment of the Second Restrictive Rule, incorporating the principle of lay representation into the General Conference, as tabulated in Article VI of the Constitution of 1784. All else relating to lay delegation is merely statutory.*

The election of Missionary Bishops by the General Conferences of 1888 and 1892 may be set down as an act amendatory to Article VII of the tabulated Constitution of 1784. The establishment of the principle of a localized episcopate for special cases is of the nature of Constitution. All else in reference to the missionary episcopate is merely statutory. Thus ¶179, Section VI, of the Discipline of 1896 may be tabulated as Amendment XII to Article VII of the Constitution of 1784.

The latest recorded action of the General Conference, in which the question of Constitution is concerned, is found in the Journal of the session of 1896, page 291. Upon motion of President William F. Warren, the Conference voted to appoint a new Constitutional Commission, to consist of three bishops, six ministers, and six laymen, whose duty it should be to review the labors of the Commission of 1888, and to set forth a draft, in logical order, of the existing organic law of the Church. They are also to propose modifications of the forms under which such law at present exists. The Commission was directed to report the result of its labors in the Church papers as early as January, 1899, and to present its final report to the General Conference of 1900.

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*The above remark will also cover the constitutional side of "The Woman Question." There is no sex in legal principles. The Constitution, as formulated and tabulated in Article VI, above, knows nothing of men or women as such. Everything in the history of the government of the Church in which the distinction of sex occurs is merely statutory. For example: The Disciplinary definition of the word "laymen" includes "all the members of the Church who are not members of the Annual Conferences." But, on the other hand, the partisan definition given to the word by the judiciary committee in 1892 applies the term to male members only. It is a mere question of legislation, which the General Conference may reverse or cast out at will.

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